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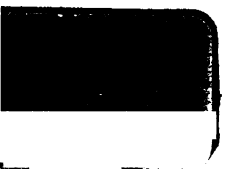
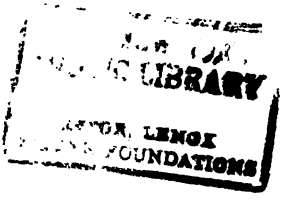


TRY·
PHENA
IN
LOVE

"RAIN, RAIN, & SUN! A RAINBOW ON THE LEA!
AND TRUTH IS THIS TO ME, & THAT TO THEE;
AND TRUTH OR CLOTHED OR NAKED LET IT BE"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TRYPHENA·IN·LOVE

BY WALTER RAYMOND
AVTHOR OF "GENTLEMAN
VPCOTT'S DAVGHTER"

WITH ILLVSTRATIONS
BY I. WALTER WEST

New York
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TO

LOUIS N. PARKER

MY FIRST EDITOR

AND CONSTANT FRIEND

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PROLOGUE

WHAT king, why, whither and from whom fleeing, was of little consequence to the villagers of Stow.

Oh, ay! Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew she would show the room, right enough, to be sure she would. A terrible long room, panelled from floor to ceiling in oak so black as a hat, with a great window at both ends. She ha'n't never denied nobody in all her life — not as anybody have ever a-heard tell. It wouldn' be one morsel-bit o' trouble to Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew. Not that. And she could tell up all about it. No fear. A thing, look-y-zee, mid goo in to one ear and out at t'other wi' zome; but not wi' Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew. She've a-got head-piece to hold un. That was her cows, as you comed by up 'pon hill, if you chanced to

turn your head. Very respectable widow-'oman! She've a-kept on the farm these ten year. Very God-fearing industrious body! She'd talk a ho'se's hind lag off, as the saying is, once get her a-started. Straight on, you'll come to the house half-way down the hill. You won't be putting nobody to no ill-convenience. Besides they do never use the room, except may-hap in summer for the sick boy.

That was the sort of information you would have got a short time ago had you stopped in the little hamlet of Stow, to inquire about the "Chamber where the king hid."

CHAPTER I

THE CHAMBER WHERE THE KING HID

It was summer. To be particular the second of July; and through the open window, with the whistle of a blackbird on the bush, and the scent of honeysuckles on the wall-side, came the sound of voices from the garden below.

"Tryphena, they have brought John's magazine."

The tone was slightly querulous. Mrs. Pettigrew, in truth, begrudged the monthly shilling for her son's magazine. She could see no use in so much reading. It was not as if it could do anybody good, like port-wine or something nourishing to eat, for instance. But she did not willingly express

this discontent. Allowance must be made for the strange appetite of a poor soul cooped up for ever within walls.

"All right, Aunt Joshua. Why, if the things of birds haven't carried off 'most all the cherries!"

The voice was ready and round, in spite of one cherry, if not more, in its mouth.

The chamber where the king hid was bare of furniture. Upon a plain deal table rendered insignificant by the truly magnificent dimensions of the room, stood a two-handled cup filled with pinks and clove-gilawfers. The flowers were homely enough but the scent was sweet. A solitary rush-bottomed chair — for only one visitor ever came at a time to sit down — was beside the couch upon which John Pettigrew was lying.

At his mother's words he raised his head and listened.

A cloud darkened his delicate eager face, as with the intuition of a sensibility starved for the realities of life and nourished on imagination,

he caught the undertone of her dissatisfaction. Then he turned to hearken for Tryphena. He understood that for the moment she was busily engaged. Would she be long in coming with this precious freight? Tryphena was never long but sometimes she did not hurry.

Ever advancing, the sunlight came streaming through the great oriel window, flooding the floor and imperceptibly stealing around the couch like a rising tide. It glistened upon the rich brown wall and the door of the inner room in which John Pettigrew slept. It gilded the corner of the yellow sandstone mantel-piece where might still be traced the half-obliterated heraldry of a forgotten race. Shadows from tall mullions fell aslant the oblong panels mottled everywhere with a gentle tracery of diamond panes and the inconstant shade of leafy tendrons quivering in the wind without.

The listening youth had raised his head into the summer, and the light shone through his

hair, showing it fair, wavy, and very long. For the barber rarely came to Stow; and what did it matter? since there was none there to see, — except his mother and Tryphena of course, who were used to it, and understood the reason. As to strangers who came to view the chamber where the king hid, they took no notice; and some from delicacy, because they dared not question, others from coarseness, because they did not care, said no word but passed their way over the hill. Yet this beardless picture of humanity, whom Nature meant by this time to be a man, was a striking feature nevertheless, so strangely did he accord with the haunting spirit of romance which lingered upon every pane and panel of the place.

Tryphena was not conscious of this of course.

She treated him with a kindness as unchangeable as her somewhat homely beauty and invariable health. The heavy oaken door creaked on its hinges, and there she stood

in the doorway in her sun-bonnet and light print frock. In one hand she held her gathered-up apron, for when Tryphena went in for literature she liked half a lapful of cherries; in the other she brought flowers, more pinks, more gilawfers and a bloomy-down or so. The precious book she carried tucked under her arm, together with a buck-horn-handled table-knife.

"Quick, Tryphena. Have you got it?" he cried, eagerly holding out his thin white hand. "The sun is too hot here. Wheel me to the other window."

"To the other window what, then?" Tryphena was quite the young woman and a stickler for her due.

"Please, Tryphena. There's a dear." He laughed quite gaily.

She slipped the flowers into the cup; and with the hand then vacant swung round the couch and pushed it across the room as if it had been a toy. This was the only journey of his life, from the west window to the

east, from the east window to the west, just as he chanced to love the sun or long for the sweet shade. That was his only change of scene. For on the west he looked upon the garden, then the cow-stalls and mow-barton full of yellow stacks, and lower in the valley the tall elms with a rookery in the tree-tops on a level with the window-sill. On the east arose the hillside, cool and sweetly wooded, with a glimpse of the village street, and the high-road white and dusty winding over the top. There the grey towers of Stow Hall, a mansion some time vacant and to let, peered between the branches.

The tiny shining tracks upon the oaken floor could tell how often Tryphena had truckled John Pettigrew to and fro.

She fetched the rush-bottomed chair and sat down beside the couch. But he could not wait. He took the book himself, and the leaves quivered with excitement whilst he cut the pages with the dinner-knife.

"Shall I read it out to ee?" asked Tryphena, sucking a cherry from its stem with her red lips. There was a rich contentment about this maid, a never-failing good-nature, fresh and inexhaustible as the fragrance of a honeysuckle. She was pretty too, with her brown hair, bright eyes, and broad, sunburnt face. There was nothing too much trouble, nothing that she would not do. She had read Hamlet aloud — surely a test of complacency in any country girl — and the more so, since Tryphena had no real feeling for poetry, but made rhetorical pauses to crack nuts between the phrases of the soliloquy.

"Presently, Tryphena," he replied impatiently; for in some respects the reading out left something to be desired.

"Tryphena what, then?"

"Tryphena, darling."

He muttered it mechanically, like an oft-repeated response in a liturgy, for he was already preoccupied with the pictures. Quite satisfied, she bent her head, crushed a cherry

stone between her truly excellent teeth, and carefully abstracted the kernel. Then, drawing the chair closer, she pointed to her lap, and added —

"Have some."

He was holding the magazine at arm's-length to admire the frontispiece, a portrait of Portia. A portion of a play finely illustrated appeared each month, and during the intervening weeks he learnt the text by heart.

"Look, Tryphena," he cried, his eyes dancing with delight. "Look at her. Isn't she beautiful? How do they manage it? I could have told her hair was light and very bright. I could fall in love with her myself."

"How do ee know she *was* light?" laughed Tryphena.

"But cannot you remember?

"*. . . and her sunny locks*
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece."

He spoke the lines softly, and they were sweet and sunny as the breath of a south wind. Then he sighed —

"I wish Bassanio had done something besides spending his money."

The illusion was so complete that it impressed Tryphena.

"Why! how you *do* talk, John. One would verily believe they were real folk."

"They are, they are," he cried eagerly. "I live with them — love them — see them as clearly as I see you, Tryphena. Portia is my lady-love. I have chosen the leaden casket from the first."

Ever so slight an asperity marked the tone of Tryphena's reply, and she screwed up her mouth as if swallowing a cherry which was not quite ripe.

"Well," she said, with a toss of the head, "if 't is a ginger-headed maid, I never cared much for that. Who are those two coming down the street, I wonder? None o' Stow."

Tryphena's commonplaces dispelled his vision as effectually as when the bubble of fancy is broken by a touch of fact. She craned forward her head, looking inquisitively down the street; but what could these mere mortals matter to him?

"Read about Lieutenant Pierce, Try. You like him. And he is my hero too."

The question was still unsolved, but she settled at once to read. It was a narrative of adventure, of an expedition into unexplored regions, of forests wild peopled with wilder men, of darkness, hunger, thirst, and ultimate success. But it was true. That was a recommendation to Tryphena, and she liked Lieutenant Pierce. So she read with satisfaction, never glancing out o' window under a semicolon — never swallowing a cherry except at a full stop. And as she read, his eyes brightened with enthusiasm. He felt his spirit throb and grow. He too could have crossed a continent if it had not been for —

Suddenly from the garden as before came the sound of his mother's voice.

"Ees. Certain'y. If you'll step this way then, if you please. Oh, don't you mention that, sir. Tidden a bit o' trouble — not one mo'sel-bit. Oh ees. That's the winder: leastways so 't have always a-bin said. You see that's all 't es a-left o' the wold house, though it mus' a-bin a fine place once by all accounts. This way, sir. This way, ma'am."

"They are coming," said Tryphena. "I thought they might when I eyed them out in street. Then here's off."

She handed him the book, and had escaped through the old doorway before the visitors reached the foot of the stairs.

With his finger between the pages to keep the place, he settled himself to wait and to endure.

What did these people want? who gaped and stared, turning his dream into a nightmare when they came to view the chamber where the king hid.

CHAPTER II

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

How did it come about? A question naturally arising to the lips of any who had seen John Pettigrew, and heard that full six years he had lain thus.

On such a summer day six years ago they were carrying hay in Craddock's close, the oblong field with the linches running along the ridge of the hill. The rick was in the corner of home-field, and the load came creaking down the village street, past the house, across the barton, and through the open gate, beyond the empty stalls. They hauled the waggon home beside the rick. Then at noon the pitchers, rickmakers, and the freckled child of ten who led the horse, sat out of sight in

the narrow shadow on the north side, to eat their " bit o' munch."

The children came running out of the orchard, across the ground, the girl in front, for already the boy was a bit of a dreamer.

Tryphena was just twelve and Jack thirteen. But then Tryphena really was the most " outdaciousest harum-scarum " that ever wore out shoe-leather. It made one truly and verily believe that " the very old Mirschey hiszelf " must be in the maid. This, in moments of exasperation, Aunt Joshua Pettigrew not only affirmed, but was prepared to stick to.

In their rambles the girl had somewhere picked up a thatcher's spar, one of the split hazel wands with which the reed is made fast to the roof; and she stopped by a patch of nettles to knock off their heads whilst she regained her breath.

Then she stood, watching old Blackbird in the shafts — poor old Blackbird! how he whisked his tail, stamped his hoof, and how

funnily he twitched his skin to frighten off the teasing flies.

The boy climbed up the ladder, danced upon the rick, and leapt over upon the load, half-burying himself in the soft sweet-smelling hay. Then he stood up to laugh triumphantly at Tryphena from this inaccessible height.

On Blackbird's shoulder, just behind the tug, the flies had clustered, blue and shining, in a patch as big over as a penny-piece. Poor old Blackbird! neither tail nor hoof could reach, and twitching was of no avail. Tryphena's indignation burned to witness such unwarrantable liberties taken with a venerable friend; and, quick as thought, she fell to knocking off the flies with the spar.

Old Blackbird shook his chains.

"Whoa! whoa!" cried the labourers from behind the rick.

But the horse took one step forward. There was a cry. For, losing his balance with the unexpected movement, the boy fell upon the dry sun-baked earth with a thud.

The haymakers came running out, and found Tryphena standing astounded, the spar still in her hand.

"The little maid het the ho'se," they said. "She mus'. The wold Blackbird is so steady as a church. Run, bwoy. Run in an' call the Missus to once."

Tryphena could neither speak nor move. Her lips parted with fear, her eyes wide open, she watched them lift the injured child, then run for a hurdle from a gap in the orchard hedge. She saw Aunt Joshua striding across the barton, a hand to her forehead to shade her eyes from the sun. She saw the look upon her aunt's face, as much of anger as alarm, and the work-folk clustering around, minute of explanation, profuse of accusation. "For 't es very wrong to het a ho'se — So 't es — An' we behin' the rick too — to be sure — "

And still clutching the spar, she lifted her pinafore with both hands as if to wipe away the tears that did not come.

Aunt Joshua was very stern beneath her

widow's cap, the emblem of a sorrow which had shed no softening influence, but only sharpened her features to a keener conflict with the world.

"And this comes o' showing kindness. This is the return made for bringing up an orphan chile, an' all the trouble an' expense o' it."

Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew was pious, and never failed in her duty; but she was also practical, and reckoned the expense. As for Tryphena, she stood still, as was afterwards related, for all the world like a stock or a stone.

"An' I don't believe she do care one mo'selbit," cried Mrs. Pettigrew, glancing back as they carried the lad into the house.

Everybody followed, even the freckled boy who led the horse; and finding herself alone, Tryphena crept away into the garden and hid amongst the tall black-currant bushes behind the cherry tree.

She heard a movement in the yard, the rattle of hoofs upon the pitching before the

stable door, and some one galloped away over the hill. Only an hour, but it seemed an age, before the doctor came. But then, sometimes waiting at the garden-hatch, sometimes walking slowly up and down the road or standing under shadow of the chestnut overright the garden wall, the gig was there the livelong afternoon. Tryphena understood in every detail, and with an instinct village-bred measured the injury by the length of the doctor's call. She was so still that a blackbird skulking through the bushes almost touched her foot.

She was forgotten. It was not until the cool of evening that a voice came from the porch, crying —

"Tryphena! Tryphena!"

Presently her aunt's step came quickly down the garden path.

"Tryphena!"

The girl stepped slowly from her hiding-place. The spar was still in her hand.

"Why didn't you answer? Where have you

been? Have you been making yourself ill with fruit?" That was the most admirable feature of Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew — she was so practical. In the depths of sorrow she never lost her head.

"No-o," faltered Tryphena.

The grey eye narrowly scanned the child, but was satisfied.

"Well, this is a pretty day's work. Go in and have your tea."

Eager to escape scrutiny, the girl walked quickly up the path.

"Well, and bless my heart and soul!" quoth Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew. "Never a word. And not so much as to ask whether her cousin is living or dead. I don't believe there's one bit o' feeling in the maid."

From that moment it became a dictum with that excellent woman that Tryphena had no feeling. This deficiency was pointed out on every appropriate occasion as a thoroughly well-established fact. And yet, now in the May-time of her young-womanhood, the girl

waited on John Pettigrew hand and foot, greedy of his affection and praise as if her happiness in life depended on his smile. Also she bid fair to be as practical as Mrs. Pettigrew. For as to the farming business, as everybody said, Tryphena did really know so much about that as whatever her Aunt Joshua Pettigrew did herself.

But whilst Tryphena, nurtured by the sun, the wind, and the rain, had grown straight and bright as the poppy-docks she sometimes brought in from the hillside, John Pettigrew, within the walls of his panelled room, developed no less rapidly, but in quite another direction.

For many months the boy's life remained a blank. His only hope was in lying still, and he lay as still as Death in the little inner room where the window is too high to look out. At last, in summer, they could wheel him every morning into the great chamber. Tryphena, running over the fields alone, followed their old delights with redoubled

vigour. She found rare birds'-eggs, — a butcher-bird's nest with four in a thorn bush, — reared a song-thrush, and brought a nest of squirrels from the wood. Such new possessions awakened a momentary joy; but, pursuit denied, the pleasure quickly palled. They were as ineffectual, having relation to his needs, as summer-lightning to the mid-day sun.

So the time passed, until one day a curate came to Stow: a quiet scholar, kind as a woman and simple as a child — an antiquarian to wit, who, without waiting to unpack his surplice, strode down to see the chamber where the king hid. He pitied the boy's loneliness and lent him books. To this kindly soul it seemed unutterably sad that the spirit should lie fallow because the body must lie at rest. And the boy was so quick and apt. At school, before his accident, he had done some Latin. Now the curate taught him Greek; and, his mind being free from interruption, he learnt and remembered with

wonderful rapidity and clearness. Soon they were reading the plays, dancing along most merrily, having less heed to scholarship than to the story. From this time there was no dearth of books. He was better and might move, and he laid the volume upon his pillow and read away the happy hours.

Thus the great gates that keep the kingdom of the mind swung slowly back. He passed unchallenged through the portals, and walked within the garden where the flowers never fade. Then one spake to him in his mother-tongue, and led him to a palace where the noon-day sun shone ever clearly on a crystal dome. There, from an upper window, he looked down upon the pageant of humanity, and watched the throng in which he might not mingle pass ever onwards down the street of Life. Heroes, warriors, priests, princes and princesses, swept unceasing by; and from the balconies above did hand-tied lovers lean and sigh, and laugh to see the merry rabble running by the side. And still

the gorgeous spectacle rolled on and on, until the brain was dizzy and the eye grew dim.

And so he closed the book.

Then through his oriel, with the twilight, came the sound of village voices and the evening fife; and in the drowsy dusk he fell asleep, to dream that on his own sweet English hill Arcadian peasants wantoned to the pipes of Pan.

So he saw Nature through a lattice, and, without living, looked on Life between the leaves of a book. But he was happy — happy as the day, until the curate left and books ran short. Then each month he hungered for the magazine. And nothing ever happened to disturb his peace except some touch of actuality dispelled his dream; as now, when stranger footsteps creaked upon the stairs.

CHAPTER III

STRANGERS

His mother, always in black, and wearing a widow's cap, opened the door, and with her hand still upon the old-fashioned latch, stood aside for the visitors to enter. Her hair, parted in the middle, had become sprinkled with grey; her even features were thinner and more severe than formerly. For ten years she had carried on the farm, managing the labouring-folk with a tyrannous promptness of decision admitting neither of argument nor reply. And by dint of industry and frugality she had saved money. That it was deserved she felt thoroughly assured. She had done her duty; and since it pleased Providence also to do his, there could be no

fault to find on either side. But success could not remove the moral obligation to grumble, keeping in view the ultimate reduction of rent. And prosperity brought no relaxation, no softening of the moral fibre. With a truly hawk-like keenness of vision she observed the smallest delinquency, and swooped upon it with unerring directness. Thus her approach brought no anticipation of pleasure; and John Pettigrew, lying on his couch, oftentimes lamented the uneasiness begotten of her presence — the presence of that mother who would have worked her fingers to the bone on his behalf.

"Oh ees," she was saying, "very interesting 'ithout doubt to folk who take delight in old things; but draughty enough in winter to scram a cat. Please to step in, sir. Step in, miss."

John barely glanced at the strangers: a gentleman of middle age, in a light summer suit, and a girl of twenty. He briefly classified them as rich gentlefolk — and as such,

what could they be to him? His finger still within the page, he raised the precious periodical to scan the table of contents.

"You zee," continued Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew instructively, "the house was never a-builded for a farm, but a fine mansion, years agone, an' then let down about the time o' the troubles, zo zome zay. Though for all that, whenever might be, the Pettigrews have a-been here ever since, but not when the king came, that was afore their time. The Lawrences lived here when the king came. They were king's men by all accounts. An' they shut the king inzide this panel, and the troopers tramped all over house, up stairs and down, and when they were gone on, they dressed the king up in cook's clothes an' put un down in kitchen to mind the spit, an' get a breath o' fresh air like, an zo the troopers comed back, and into kitchen, an' the king he turned roun' as you might turn roun' to look at me, an' the cook he up an' gi'ed the king a clout in head, an'

told un not to let the meat burn, a lazy fellow, an' so the troopers went on about their business."

"Surely a reminiscence of Alfred and the cakes," suggested the gentleman.

"I only gi'e the tale as 't wur related to me," said Mrs. Pettigrew shortly.

As this mere shadow of doubt was cast upon the familiar story, the youth quickly turned his head as if ready to defend the beloved romance. The girl, apparently paying little attention to Mrs. Pettigrew's monologue, was looking at him. As their eyes met, a scarcely perceptible blush rose to her cheek. He fancied she had been pitying his infirmity. Then she walked quietly towards the window, and stood quite close to his couch.

"You have a beautiful view," she said, looking away at the hill. "That must be Stow Hall amongst the trees."

"Yes."

"You believe in the king, do you not?"

"Yes."

"So do I. I believe in everything."

She turned towards him with a smile which won his confidence, and they both laughed.

Clad in a travelling cloak of pale Indian silk, which covered whilst it could not conceal the rich symmetry of her figure, against the dark brown panelling she stood in soft relief. She wore a broad straw hat to shade her from the summer sun. But in waves upon her forehead, and rippling above her delicate white ear, a mass of luxuriant hair shone like a golden halo. And whilst they laughed, as John Pettigrew looked into her eyes so frank and sympathetic, it seemed there had suddenly come to him the embodiment of his recent dream.

"I am afraid we disturbed your reading. I suppose that is the penalty you pay for living in such a beautiful room."

"Oh no. Not at all. I mean, it did not matter — I — "

He stammered his denial, and stopped con-

fused. He had seen so few, that to talk with anyone but Tryphena was difficult to him. At the other end of the room his mother was still running on; she had reached the modern history of the village of Stow — how the Squire had run through his money. "A pleasant gentleman too as ever you'd wish to zet eyes on; but that don't let the Hall, sir. No, no, that don't let the —"

"I have not yet seen *The Aldine* for this month," continued the visitor. "Is it good? Might I look one moment? I will not lose the place."

He handed her the magazine.

"How strange!" she added. "You were reading the thing I wanted to see. Do you like it?"

At once his timidity was forgotten. He glowed with enthusiasm. The strangeness of this unexpected interview no longer held him tongue-tied, but he talked as freely as to Tryphena.

"I love it," he cried. "I read it over and

Might I look one moment?

To face page 30.

over again, until I know it step by step, just as it happened every day. How they cut their way through the forest — and crossed the river. It is wonderful. I always say he is my hero — "

Whilst he was speaking she had turned the page.

"Oh yes. Here it is," she said half to herself. Then she handed back the magazine. "It is very like him," she added, pointing to a portrait of Lieutenant Pierce.

"But do you know him?"

"Oh yes. I know him."

"Know Lieutenant Pierce?"

In his eagerness he raised himself upon his elbow. The thing seemed so strangely incredible. For although the poet might pass the shining coinage of his brain for very truth, the reality of life was remote and altogether intangible.

"You will be able to recognise him now when he comes to see the chamber where the king hid," she said, as a woman sometimes

says a pleasant thing to satisfy the wonder of a child.

"There is no chance of that."

At that moment Mrs. Pettigrew paused, and the gentleman prepared to depart.

The girl held out her daintily gloved hand. "Good bye," she said. "I shall tell Lieutenant Pierce he has an ardent admirer at Stow."

The young man watched her wistfully as she passed out of the arched oak door.

Then again, as the visitors loitered a moment on the garden path to look at the flower-knot, he overheard snatches of their talk.

"— from a waggon, she told me, and suffered an injury to the spine."

"And will he recover?"

"They hope so. He improves."

Then the girl with infinite pity said —

"Poor boy!"

Once more through the open window came the sound of voices, for Tryphena had embraced the recent opportunity to run "up

street," a proceeding not always meeting with the approval of Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew, for if there *was* one thing in life more than another that good woman never could abide, 'twas a "gad-about."

But Tryphena had picked up a bit o' news that afternoon.

"They came to Stow, Aunt Joshua, to see over the Hall. And they went over all the rooms, and out in stables, and everywhere, and then they came down here."

"Then 'tis to be hoped they'll take it, and do some good in the parish. But they'll never take it. Nobody won't never come to Stow."

"Tryphena! Tryphena!" he called in his excitement. He could scarcely wait for her to come.

"Did you see her, Tryphena? Wasn't she beautiful? I call her Portia. She stood here and talked to me. And she knows Lieutenant Pierce. Think of that, Tryphena! knows him to speak to. And didn't she look nice?"

"It was one o' these-here Tussore —"

"But I don't mean that, Tryphena. She was beautiful. I mean her face."

"La! John. How you do talk," replied Tryphena with some little impatience. "Why, she had a head like a house a-fire."

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT CALAMITY

ANOTHER month had brought another magazine, but it was Sunday.

His couch was wheeled before the window looking out upon the street, for on this day of rest there was movement in Stow. Young men did walk their maids, in Sunday clothes so fine as to be a serious limitation upon their demonstrations of love. Parents in shirt-sleeves carried children in arms into the fields, and picked the pretty poppies as they passed along the footpath through the standing wheat. Distant relatives in twos and threes came strolling over the hill to drink "a dish o' tay," and "hear-tell how all the folk be a-getten on like." Thus on Sunday an atmosphere of poetry per-

vaded Stow, which, in the sweet delights of love, and children's prattle, and the unlooked-for dropping-in of friends, the villagers drank all unconsciously as they breathed fresh air.

In summer there was evening-church; and when the chimes struck out, from the outlying farms worshippers came slowly in, quaint and leisurely, now and again stopping to look at stock and ripening crops, and still with time to spare.

Then Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew, in the full dignity of a black stuff gown adorned with silk and bugles, which glistened through the elegant pattern of her black lace shawl, her parasol erect, her books firmly carried in her left hand, passed through the garden, and up the road to her devotions.

Tryphena was to stay at home with John, and she stood at the hatch watching her aunt out of sight, until everything was quiet and the bells were down. Then she ran down in the garden to shake the early stubbard tree. Through his open window John could hear the

rustle of the bough, and the thud of apples striking upon the ground.

Presently she came and seated herself on the very edge of the couch, the yellow-green fruit in her lap. In her white frock she was as pretty a maid as you might meet in many a month of Sundays. Her eyes, her sun-browned face, looked brighter than ever, and to-night her hair was tumbled where some of the falling apples had pitched upon her head.

"What shall us do?" she cried in her restless, impulsive way. Tryphena was not illiterate. She could speak excellent English — when she chose. But such eccentricities of the local dialect came easily to her tongue, and suited well the spirit of her characteristic good humour.

In truth there was nothing to do. On the eve of Sunday, in Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew's house, everything which savoured of worldly pleasure was carefully hidden from view. The weekly newspaper, neatly folded, was concealed under the cushion of the chintz-covered arm-chair,

and the magazine was clapped under the clean table-cloth in the dresser drawer. In this way every recollection of frivolity was banished, and the day became serious enough to have been free from sin. Enormities, however, were at times committed by the disreputable of Stow, in outrage of the little verses commonly taught to children as soon as they could lisp —

"We mus' not play a-Zunday,
Because it es a zin;
But we mid play a wicked *days*
Gin Zunday come again."

"I don't know," replied John. He looked wistfully at the empty street and away over the forsaken hill. "I hate it to come on a Saturday."

"He idden in the drawer to-day. He was put up a-top o' the corner cupboard out o' sight," cried Tryphena, taking another bite at an apple.

"I think the travels finish this month," he said regretfully.

"I don't know, sure. Then Portia had better go and marry Lieutenant Pierce, and let us have something fresh," laughed the girl; but such gaiety was not communicable, and John only sighed wearily.

Tryphena watched him with eyes brimful of mischief.

"Now, s'posing —" she began with teasing deliberation, "s'posing I were to pop down an' bring up the magazine. What then?"

"O Tryphena!" He stopped. The idea was so delightful, and yet a doubt, cool as the breath of evening after a summer day, chilled his enthusiasm.

"Why, you do shiver, John. Shall I pull to the window?" said the girl quickly.

"No. No."

"Aunt Joshua would never find it out. You could keep it up here. And mind to pop it under the pillow if she should come upstairs. She would never have a thought."

"Do, Tryphena. Run down, there's a dear."

"Oh yes. Then I suppose Tryphena would

be so good as anybody — even if I haven't a-got a head like a fu'ze-bush in full flower."

"Better. Better than anybody. You always are."

"Then I sha'n't," said the girl shortly.

But as he turned towards the window, she quietly drew forth the magazine. It had been doubled to go into her pocket, and now she bent it back and flattened it upon her knee.

"Tryphena! You dear! Then you had it all the time."

"All very well," quoth she, with a fine affectation of hiding her delight at his surprise.

Excitements were so rare to John Pettigrew that the reading that evening was a new and pleasurable experience. He revelled in imaginary danger and tasted the sweets of stolen fruit. Not that there was any real risk of detection; for his mother could not come unseen, and would no more think of suspecting such iniquity than of flying. But

imagination cast a glamour over the proceedings, and Tryphena never read so attentively and well. Still she could not help an occasional glance "up street."

"One minute, John. There's Amelia Ann in the road. I want to speak to her about her real silk umbrella," she suddenly cried. "I'll be back in half a jiffy."

In her haste she put the open book face downwards on the table, then ran downstairs and out of doors. John Pettigrew, seeing that he could not reach his treasure, laid his head upon the pillow and resigned himself to wait. He heard their voices, and the laughter of Amelia Ann getting fainter, as the girls walked down the road together.

He fell into a reverie. From his pillow he looked between the straggling creepers into the infinite blue sky. High in the gentle air the solemn rooks came flocking homeward to their elms. Where did they come from, this innumerable host, ever looming out of the far distance into sight? And how the days were

drawing in! for already the sunlight was fading from the fleecy cloud. In all this there was a sort of sadness which filled him with an indefinable content.

Tryphena and his mother never noticed living things, except in so far as they "did good" or "did harm" or "paid to keep." What could it matter whence came the rooks? Keep them off the winter wheat and spring barley, and have a rook-shooting party and a pie. They never looked at the sky unless in anxiety for wet, or to predict a hot day to-morrow.

And yet in the changing aspects of Nature, as glimpsed through this poor window-pane, there was something which awakened emotion, and by an invisible thread of association led his thoughts into strange ways. What quality possessed this calm serenity of eventide to guide his fancy to the woman once seen, whose name he did not know, who spoke to him in commonplaces with incomparable kindness and grace? For, indeed, she had said nothing except that she was acquainted with Lieutenant

Pierce; and yet — what an odd idea that was of Tryphena!

The garden hatch fell to with a slam.

Then Tryphena was returning. In her hurry to overtake Amelia Ann, she had left the door half open, and now he could hear every sound and movement in the kitchen below. Someone passing the dresser put a couple of plates upon the table on the way to the three-cornered cupboard. Then a chair was pushed back, the round-backed oak chair, with the red cushion, which stood on one side of the fireplace. He knew it by the grating noise it made upon the stone floor. Surely such well-directed activity did not savour of Tryphena. He raised his head. The street was filled with villagers leaving church and loitering to chat upon the causeway or at the corner where the roads meet. Then he recognised his mother's step upon the stair.

She had brought in a candle in her hand by time it was wanted, for Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew, bless you, had plenty enough head-piece

to save her heels. She crossed to the mantelpiece and placed it beside the candlestick upon the narrow shelf. Then she shut the window, and seated herself in the chair.

"Sure, we had the new pa'son from over the hill to-night. But la there! I don't think much o' he. Little finnikin fellow. So much as ever he could zee over the pulpit cushion. An' let us out a quarter afore eight. Why, really a'most so soon as ever we'd a-got hold o' the text, 'twas *An' now to God.* An' speak down into the book so as you could scarce hear one word in zix. To be sure, he mid be a good man, but no preacher —"

Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew suddenly stopped to blow into her gloves, for already this industrious woman had taken off her bonnet, dusted it with her pocket-handkerchief, and carefully rolled up the strings.

"Oh! An' as I come out o' porch, who should come along behind but Mrs. Laver up to Hall. An' she sort o' meanied to me, an' zo I stopped back to once, an' this was

Mrs Pettigrew suddenly stopped to blow into her gloves.

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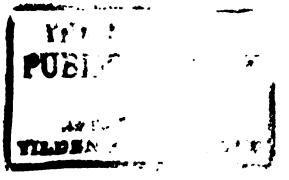
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to zay that they've a-let the Hall to a gentleman of the name o' Mervin, to come in September for the shooting, a widow-gentleman wi' one daughter, an' the very zame that came a month agone, and walked down here to zee the room. And the young lady have a-wrote to Mrs. Laver, to say they'll be here the beginning o' next month, and everybody to stay on as usual, anyways for the present. And Mrs. Laver do zay that so far as she could zee, when they looked over the house, though o' cou'se that wasn't so very much, they seemed to be very nice-spoken people, an' likely to gi'e satisfaction in the parish. An' so 'tis to be hoped they will."

She had carefully pulled down the fingers of her gloves and laid them with the rolled-up strings in the crown of her bonnet. Then she got up to depart, just as Tryphena was running in from the road.

"I'll just put your can'le ready. 'Tis a'most dark as 'tis. An' then you can have a pig's trotter vor your zupper."

Supper! What could he want with supper, having just heard such wonderful news? Portia was coming! and the mansion on the hillside was changed to Belmont in a trice. He said never a word to his mother, but why did not Tryphena hasten to share this marvellous intelligence? In his excitement the magazine was quite forgotten.

Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew struck a lucifer, coughed, and held it from her nose until the brimstone was consumed. Then, as she brought the lighted candle to the table, her eye fell upon the hapless magazine.

"So this is how you spend the Sunday evening, is it, John Pettigrew?" she cried, pouncing upon the offending object and holding it up before him. "In reading worldly tales and stuff when other people be to church, wi' their thoughts upon better things. An' sure, if there is any creature in this world have a-got cause for thankfulness 'tis you, who might ha' bin killed outright if it hadn' a-bin for the mercy o' Providence, an' the care an' trouble that have a-bin tookt

all these years. But never a thought about that. And however you can hope that ever a blessing *can* rest where there's such wickedness and deceit, and no care for his commandments, is more 'an I can think. But 'tis all the outcome o' reading this here play-acting and rubbish. I won't have no more o' it. 'Tis nothing but waste o' money at the best, an' when do lead to wickedness 'tis vull time to stop. I won't have no more o' it, I say. I'll go in to bookshop myzelf, next market-day that ever is, and tell the man not to zend the silly thing here. And as to Tryphena! 'Tis all Tryphena; I know 'tis. A good-for-nothing, ungrateful maid. I'll just gi'e Tryphena a piece o' my mind when I've a-put away my bonnet and stepped downstairs. A huzzy! But she never had no thought nor any feeling — There, I won't have no more o' it. I won't have no more o' it, I zay — "

Constantly repeating this determination, she carried off her bonnet and gloves; and presently John heard her in the kitchen, scolding Try-

phena and endlessly reiterating that the magazine should be stopped. He cherished no hope; for his mother's expressed intentions were as inexorable as the edicts of the Medes and Persians. In his misfortune was no compensating advantage. A king may lose his kingdom to be free from care; but the loss of these few monthly pages made his room a prison, and condemned his soul to solitude. He turned his face towards the black window, but his candle put to shame the dying day. The sky was dull as lead, the wood a blot upon the hillside.

Tryphena came, bringing his supper on a tray.

In moments of calamity Tryphena had no words. With her self-accusation was silent, and contrition only found expression in timid attentions. She shook the pillow twice, and smoothed the counterpane with unnecessary zeal. She knew it was all her fault, and that her thoughtlessness alone had made detection possible. She parted the pig's trotter in two and put mustard on the edge of his plate.

But John could not eat for choking, and Tryphena could not speak for tears.

CHAPTER V

THE REAL SILK UMBRELLA

"Coop! Coop! Coop! Coop—"

It was just after tea, and Tryphena was in the yard about her turkeys. He could not see her from the window, but a succession of little sounds pictured the scene before his mind, and he followed her proceedings in every detail. The old turkey-cock gobbled with excitement, set down his wings and ran. Tryphena must be standing near the barton gate, her sleeves upturned, the meal upon her fingers, and the wooden bowl pressed against her side. Then he heard the pigeons fly down from the house-top with whirring wings. They used to pitch upon Tryphena's shoulders years ago and peck peas from between her red lips.

"Kiss me," she would say, and turn her head; and as a boy he was jealous because they always came to her. That was the way with everything, for Tryphena seemed nearer akin to living things than he had ever been. Doubtless they came to her still, for he heard a sudden fluttering which ceased almost as soon as it began. Tryphena must have moved. Then a duck burst out into sudden "squacketting." She must have stooped to pick up something to throw at the old drake — greedy thing!

Aunt Joshua Pettigrew had allotted to Tryphena the management of the poultry, and from the profits the girl defrayed her personal expenses and paid for her ribbons and frocks. And to year she was meeting with wonderful good luck. Neither fox nor epidemic ravaged her roost; and if an unfortunate chick did but so much as gape, with the same Tryphena chased him into a corner, caught him by the leg, tickled his throat with a feather, and preserved him from the pip. To be sure there were cares and anxieties, but also moments of triumph. Try-

phena had promised to treat herself to a real silk umbrella against the rains of winter.

Amelia Ann had been the possessor of a real silk umbrella this twelvemonth. She purchased it last fall of a packman, and as she fully explained to Tryphena many times, but especially on that fatal night when the magazine was lost with Lieutenant Pierce and all hands, she was very well pleased with the way it was turning out. It didn't show the leastest sign o' wear up to now. But then Amelia Ann was careful to keep it in the case — a beautiful black shiny case, that fitted exactly. And she always carried her alpaca if it looked likely for wet. No. In Amelia Ann's judgment the packman did sell things every bit so good as they at the shops. To be sure they could afford to, because they hadn't a-got anything to keep up. And as to that, if you do deal wi' a "Johnny Fortnight," you hadn't any need to demean yourself to go on trust. He'd take the money down dap — ah! quick enough, an' make an

allowance. No fear. In Amelia Ann's experience the travelling Scotch draper had displayed no deep-rooted objection to cash.

But la! Tryphena had made up her mind weeks before that.

"Coop! Coop! Coop! Coop!"

He heard the birds run and scramble. Then how silent it became when there was enough for all. The empty bowl in her hand, Tryphena was standing, as still as a statue, watching the birds feed. By a superior alertness of the other senses, the blind detect the presence and distinguish the movements of people around them with an accuracy quite remarkable. And these years of enforced imprisonment, caged in this narrow chamber, his range of vision restricted and activity denied, had made him quite intuitive. He could not see Tryphena, but he knew she had not moved.

"Tryphena! Tryphena!" he suddenly shouted. "There is the packman coming over the hill."

"Oh!" replied Tryphena, but without enthusiasm.

"Won't you see about the real silk umbrella?"

A purchase of such importance might well arouse the interest of all the house, and he spoke with eager delight, for the girl had talked of it for months. She came into the garden, and stood below the window. The weather was still hot. The ruddy wheat upon the hillside was up in stitch, and you could hear the sound of the distant reapers in the yellow barley.

"I don't know but what I'll wait," she said thoughtfully. "Like enough he wouldn't carry 'em this time o' year."

"He'll bring one next journey if you tell him."

"I reckon there's plenty o' time," she replied, looking wistfully in the direction of the street.

A really first-rate excitement was so rare in Stow that Tryphena's determination to

wait was a disappointment to John. He watched her attentively. During the last few weeks, ever since the upset on that Sunday night, she had seemed quite changed. A seriousness overshadowed all her being, and she asked strange questions when they read. And now as she stood there, her countenance was overclouded with hesitation and doubt.

The packman marched straight up to the garden hatch and entered. A tall strapping Scot, with high cheek-bones, sandy hair, and a complexion burnt red in the sun, he just lifted his hat to Tryphena, and plunged into business at once. He had a bustling way with him, and a bold assurance, which seemed from the first to refuse to take "no" for an answer.

"I stopped to show you a nice silk umbrella—"

"No, thank you," interposed Tryphena.

"Of really tip-top quality and workmanship, finest twilled, ivory handle, flexible ring, Fox's frame—"

"Not to-day, thank you."

"A really beautiful article, guaranteed to wear, in a best polished patent waterproof case — "

"Don't open it. Don't open it," implored Tryphena, for the Scotchman (upon whom refusal seemed to act as encouragement) had swung the pack from his back, and was commencing to unbuckle and turn back the straps upon the garden path. He was a middle-aged, experienced man, and he fascinated Tryphena with a piercing grey eye.

"The young lady at Higher Farm told me last journey you were thinking of one, and I brought them on on purpose. She informed me this afternoon, as I came over the hill, that you had not procured one. Good afternoon, madam."

Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew, attracted by a strange voice of masculine gender, came sailing out of the porch and down the pathway.

For a moment Tryphena vacillated.

Amelia Ann would wonder, and that friendly

maiden's curiosity was hard to satisfy, her wonder bad to bear. Tryphena blushed crimson as if from some humiliation. Then she summoned her determination. "But since then I've changed my mind," she said, quite snappishly, for already in imagination she was shutting up Amelia Ann. And she hurried away to find refuge in the house.

"Good afternoon," returned Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew.

"Is there anything I can show you, madam?"

"Not to-day, thank you."

"Any silks, calicoes, lindsays —"

"Not to-day, thank you."

"— buttons, tapes, or laces?"

"Not to-day, thank you."

"Thank you."

The wily Caledonian rebuckled his straps. "Ah! but it's beautiful weather for the harvest," he said, as he lifted the pack to his back.

"Ees," echoed Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew,

reflectively. "Beautiful weather for the har'est."

But having turned the corner, he called her cat, catamaran, and other opprobrious names, under the impression that she had prevented his deal.

What was the matter with Tryphena? Here she had gone mad for a real silk umbrella, and talked about it for months all over the place, and made such a fuss that one would think the clouds must fall, and then to go and turn about like a weather-cock, and make herself the talk of the parish. For Amelia Ann's red-rag would run nineteen to the dozen. Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew, above everything, disliked the idle tattle of her neighbours. The mere possibility of disparaging criticism touched her pride. Besides, the thing was incomprehensible however she looked at it, and Tryphena's behaviour mysteriously suspicious. The girl must have been wasting her money in some foolery or another. Yes. No other solution was possible. Tryphena was in financial difficulties. Mrs. Joshua

Pettigrew strode indoors, fully determined to seize a favourable opportunity to probe this matter thoroughly, and give Tryphena a piece of her mind.

Excited and flushed, the girl ran into John's room and took her usual seat beside the couch. The last of the magazines, already several times re-read, lay upon the table; and, to conceal her agitation, Tryphena took it up and turned over the leaves as if searching for something. She was so disturbed and confused that, in a strange, forced voice, she began to talk for talking sake. She laughed unnaturally to prove herself at ease; and she read snatches from the list of new publications bound in at the end.

"Look, John! Why, here's Lieutenant Pierce's book.

NOW READY.

THE TRAVELS OF

LIEUTENANT PIERCE.

Bless my heart alive! I should ha' thought everybody would ha' read that by this time. My stars! what a lot o' books there is. Enough to turn the heads of all creation only to think o' 'em, let alone read. Now, what's the best book in the world, John? Not the Bible. Lef out he. Shakespeare? Ha! ha! You do say that because you do know it by heart or because of Portia. Now, I never thought much o' Shakespeare myself. What's this now?

ARCTIC EXPLORATION.

'Full of Thrilling Adventure.' — *Scotsman.*

I suppose that's quite so good as Lieutenant Pierce."

But Tryphena could not keep it up. She put down the magazine, sighed, rose and moved uneasily towards the window.

"I don't know, John, but what I'll pop on my hat, and run across to Amelia Ann. It

might be just so well. If Aunt Joshua should call, you just tell her where I'm gone. You see, I might stop about a little bit. Still, for all that, I sha'n't be so wonderful long. Yes, I think I'll just do that. But I sha'n't let Aunt Joshua see me go."

What *was* the matter with Tryphena? Now she was gone, he lay back in one of his day-dreams and wondered. Her manner beyond doubt betrayed that the girl had something on her mind. Her abrupt departure seemed the result of a resolution suddenly but finally taken. His eyes were fixed upon the eternal hill, but his thoughts wandered far away — across the fields to Amelia Ann — along the dusty road after the packman. He was sorry for Tryphena — very sad about the real silk umbrella. He understood the sacrifice, and fathomed the depth of her disappointment; and something seemed to whisper that the girl had a secret, so close to her heart that she would keep it even from him. And they had been such friends — all these long years, and before.

He could not bear for Tryphena to be unhappy. She was the one element of warm vitality in his life of airy dreams. She was better to him than books, bringing every hour to his dark panelled chamber the fragrance of the garden and the freshness of the fields. Scarcely a moment of his life but had some touch of Tryphena. Should she be sad, the sunlight must become oppressive and the shadow cold.

He watched her passing up the street, walking hastily, like a person fearing to be late. When she had turned the bend, his eye wandered to the footpath across the fields, and waited for her there. But she was long in coming. The children blowing dandelion clocks had run along and behind the hedgerow, but still she did not appear. She must have met with someone, and been hindered by the four-cross-way. Then where the dusty road winds like a white ribbon over the head of the hill, he caught sight of a moving figure. He quickly raised his head and looked intently.

It was Tryphena hurrying as before. Where could she be going that way? And why this mystery about Amelia Ann?

He felt hurt that she had deceived him. It was so strange to find this hidden interest in which he might not participate, that he turned his face into the pillow and could have cried. Then, like a flash of lightning in the darkness, there burst upon him suddenly a bright idea, and all became clear.

Tryphena was in love!

Everything pictured in poetry, or read in romance, nourished and confirmed this thought, so that it grew faster than an Indian wizard's mango-tree. It covered him as the gourd covered Jonah. It held him captive beyond resistance, and without room for doubt. Of course Tryphena was in love! Therein lay the explanation of her sadness, her strange distraction, and the inexplicable economy of that afternoon. A girl in love would certainly have need to save.

Again he raised his head and looked away over the hill.

Were Tryphena gone it would be desolate indeed. They had said "a little longer, and he should go downstairs"; but the knowledge that he was improving and would recover was robbed of half its hope if he must be left to live alone with his mother. For only sympathy can dispel solitude, and speech is oftentimes more lonely than silence. And although Tryphena had little thought and no feeling for poetry, she was as frank and open as fresh air. There would be opposition too, for his mother was prone to oppose.

But oh! the beauty of it.

If any momentary selfishness tinged his thoughts, in a clearer conception of Tryphena's joy it vanished, like a night-begotten mist in the sunshine. On Fancy's wings he found that quiet corner in the pine plantation over the edge of the hill, where the cone-sprinkled ground was carpeted with last year's spines; and there, beneath the hanging branch where once the goldcrest had its nest, he came on Love. He saw the smile; he felt the throb;

he heard Tryphena sigh. He grew quite eager for her return. For it seemed another story had begun; and he would read, not from pale pages in an ineffectual type, but on her warm unconscious blushes and in her tell-tale eyes. He watched intently the distant road that crowned the hill. With her coming another chapter would commence.

But Tryphena was long. The lengthening shadows of the tall elms stretched across the path and right up to the linch. At last he noticed two figures by the stile, standing awhile before they said "Good bye." Tryphena and Amelia Ann. Then she must have gone to "Higher Farm" at last. But that he could understand. She said that she was going to Amelia Ann; and so she had come around the back of the hill from native love of truth for conscience' sake. The duplicity of Stow was wont to save its soul from lying by some such simple device. Then they parted and he saw Tryphena run.

She had brought two partially ripe apricots

in her pocket — from "Higher Farm," she said, "the first ripe," — and she offered them with an ingenuous delight which almost disarmed him. But the dust of the road was on her feet as white as flour; and as she sat, she stooped and flicked it away with her handkerchief.

And everything was changed. Her depression had fled. A dimpling radiance shone upon her countenance; for, as they say in Stow, she smiled "all over her face." He had never seen a happiness so exultant, a satisfaction so complete. The gloom, the anxiety, the thoughtfulness of the last few weeks had been transmuted into golden gladness by the alchemy of Love. She had made it right with Amelia Ann, she said. She told her that her Aunt Joshua did not "care so very much about them pack-fellows."

Who could it be? Amelia Ann had brothers, it was true.

"Tryphena! Tryphena!"

Aunt Joshua called and she must go.

She paused one moment. Then she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him twice, and in those kisses he felt the secret that she could not share.

He knew Tryphena was in love.

CHAPTER VI

TRYPHENA IN LOVE

"Is there anything for me, postman?"

"No, miss. Nothen at all."

It was Tryphena at the gate; and yesterday she went in the same way, and waited until the postman passed. It did not follow that she expected a letter, always somewhat of a rarity at the farm, for the postman was one o' Stow, born and bred, and a very civil young chap, willing to bring along any little thing, as Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew expressed it, "in the han' o' un." By this phrase Mrs. Pettigrew greatly modified the inconvenience of many an ill-shaped, hump-backed parcel, and relieved herself of all sense of obligation.

Since Tryphena's walk over the hill some

days had elapsed. The last sheaf was hauled home to mow; and the leasers, women and children, were busy in the wheat stubbles from morn to night. Tryphena was as happy as the day was long. The real silk umbrella was evidently quite forgotten; and although Aunt Joshua was certainly most terribly short, and very much inclined to "naggy," the girl went singing all over the house. Only of a morning did she display any unnatural excitement. Then she loitered in the garden — popped into the road to glance up the street — evincing all the symptoms of feverish expectation, until the postman had gone by, and self-possession was restored until another day.

"Anything for me, postman?"

"Wull, miss. Not for you ezac'ly. There is somethen in the bag, but —"

"Oh yes. It must be for me," she cried eagerly.

How stupid and slow he was! With clumsy deliberation he pulled the bag round upon his waistcoat; and then the fool fumbled as

FU.
ASTOR, ...
WILDEN FOUNDA...

And Aunt Joshua coming down the path too —

To face page 69.

if all his fingers were thumbs. She could have shaken the man. And Aunt Joshua coming down the path too—

"What is it? what is it?" inquired that admirable woman from afar.

"Only something for me, aunt."

"What is it?"

The man drew forth a small parcel just as Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew came bustling up, and, disregarding Tryphena's outstretched hand, turned his back to the sun, puckered his face, and laboriously read—

"*John Pettigrew, Esq.,*
Old Manor Farm,
Stow."

"No, missie. Tidden vor you. You mus' wait till 'nother day," he said jocosely. He lifted his hat, drew the back of his hand across his forehead, and puffed and blew. With some people, reading is warmer work than a long tramp, and the labour of wit promotes perspiration more than walking.

Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew promptly seized upon the packet, and she also read the inscription aloud. Her frugal nail was already upon the knot, for it is unlucky to cut a string, when Tryphena looked over her shoulder, and read — "*John Pettigrew, Esq.*"

"Yes. It must be for John," murmured the girl in astonishment.

"And I don't know but what he ought to open it," reflected Mrs. Pettigrew (for the knot being tight allowed time for reflection), and she strode hastily towards the chamber where the king hid.

Tryphena followed, a look of disappointment and perplexity upon her face.

He had overheard snatches of their conversation, and raised himself, leaning upon his elbow, his face keen with anxiety to understand what all this might mean. His nervous tremulous fingers quickly unfastened the knot — and there —

THE TRAVELS OF LIEUTENANT PIERCE.

A brand-new volume, bound in green and lettered with gold, grateful as the untrodden forest, pierced by one bright shaft from a relentless sun.

"It must be from Portia!" he cried.

His voice quavered at the sight of this unexpected gift; and he turned the leaves, lingering with delight upon the unsullied purity of each virgin page.

"Porsha! Porsha? What's Porsha?" asked Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew.

"That's what he calls the lady who came to see the room," explained Tryphena, but without enthusiasm.

"La! Never! Why, that's they what have a-tookt 'the Hall.' Why, their name is Mervin," cried the matter-of-fact woman, carried away by the torrent of his excitement. For beneath the black print blouse which Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew affected of a morning beat a mother's heart; and since this new possession entailed no expense, she could yield to gratification at the attentions of gentle-folk.

"Though 'twould really ha' been a'most better if she'd sent something John hadn' a-read," suggested Tryphena coldly.

"But look, Tryphena! Look!"

In his explorations he had lighted upon the title-page, and there, in bold penmanship, was the inscription —

"*To*
John Pettigrew, Esq.,
from
J. M. Pierce."

"She must have told him. She said she would. And that is his writing — his own writing, Tryphena. Look."

Tryphena looked.

"I never could see so much myself in these autographs and writings of people," she said coldly. "Unless, of course, it was of somebody anybody knew, and was sort o' fond o' —"

"Well, really! Tryphena," interposed Mrs. Pettigrew sharply. "I can't think whatever's

the matter wi' ee. Sure! 'Tidden for you of all people in this world to begrudge the poor boy his pleasures. Whatever's a-coming to the maid, I can't think. But there, you never had any feeling, Tryphena, and never will. An' if I couldn't be better tempered, I'd just go out by myself, if I was you, an' pick the plums."

During that morning, whenever John Pettigrew found time to glance from his window, he saw Tryphena in the garden, mounted on a kitchen chair, solemnly picking plums.

She took no further interest in the postman after that, and for several mornings he strode unheeded down the road. She scarcely came to John's room at all, and could never find time to sit with him. She was so busy, she said. For after the plums were picked, there was the jam-making, and then the preparations for the harvest-home. And these excuses would have served as sufficient had Tryphena been happy as formerly. But she never laughed now, nor sang about the house, and only

scrunched a ripe "quarrener" occasionally with a sad heart. Truly love is in a bad way when a sweet apple ceases to delight.

From his window John Pettigrew noticed these changes, and at first fancied her silence due to a feeling of shame that she had not entered into his delight at receiving the book. But that was nothing after all. She had suffered a personal disappointment, he felt certain. Tryphena a kill-joy? The very idea was ludicrous. And surely by this time she had lived long enough to understand her aunt's asperities.

Then every little incident and detail wove itself into the fabric of his belief that Tryphena was in love. But a change crept over the spirit of his dream. Her courtship was no native flower, shrinking at first in some shy corner from the whispering breath of spring, but a clandestine passion, vivid, exotic, unable to exist in the chilling atmosphere of common-place life. No neighbour from some familiar homestead, with its thatch and yellow mows, had got a bit of an inkling after the

maid. But some stranger from the town beyond the hill besieged Tryphena's heart and starved its gaiety. By arrangement she had sought to intercept the letter which never came. And now the opportunity was lost. Perhaps he had gone away.

With this constant contemplation of Love a deeper sense of solitude stole into his heart. His soul hungered for a sentiment denied. If Tryphena were to tell her story that would be something. He could live on that; for in famine a mere crust becomes a generous subsistence. But Love, in warm reality, he told himself, could never come to nestle against his breast. Years ago a swallow used to enter through a broken pane, and build beside the rafter of this vacant room. Then one summer day *he* came. Only once the bird flew through the open window, darted up and down, and fled affrighted from the presence of his couch. But Love was shyer than the swallow, whose masonry still lingered on the beam.

"Hullo, missie. There's zummet for ee theäz time, then." The postman had stopped on the path and shouted to Tryphena in the garden.

"I had to go in to town this a'ternoon," he continued, "an' they axed me in to shop to bring un on. An' zo I thought to jus' drop un wi' ee when I comed down to clear the box. But I zaid to 'em, I zaid, 'You've a-got yourzelf into a pretty puxy, I zaid, to let young meäster have his up a wick avore missie have a-got hers. There,' I zaid, 'missie 'll ballyrag you like a pickpocket,' I zaid, 'when she do come in to town.' An' wi' the zame, I comed on. Sure 'nough."

Tryphena hastened to receive a parcel very similar in appearance to the unexpected gift which had given John Pettigrew so much astonishment and pleasure. She carried it quickly into the kitchen. Everything was quiet, for Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew had gone into the dairy, and he heard Tryphena saw the string with a table-knife, and crumple the paper in her hand. Then she came slowly up the stairs.

She stood by his side, and silently laid a volume on his bed. Her face was painfully serious, her lip tremulous, and it was full a minute before the words would come.

"I — I — I didn't mean any harm, John. Only it made it look as if — as if I hadn't thought of it till after, when the other book came. And I did. I thought of it first. I walked in to town and ordered it that same night the packman was here — and — and wasn't so very long gone either — "

"O Tryphena ! "

"— For I was back 'ithin the hour an' three-quarters, an' went round Higher Farm too — "

"But Tryphe— "

"An' I thought it 'ud be better to get the '*Explorations*'; 'twould be all so well to have something you hadn't a-read. For I never cared about a real silk umbrella one mo'sel-bit. Not in my heart like, when you hadn't a-got your magazine. An' I ran a'most all the way. An' I thought 't 'ud a-bin a surprise until t'other came. But still, for all that,

you do like this all so well as that — don't ee, John?"

"Better, Tryphena. Much better," he cried, taking both her hands in his.

Her light-heartedness returned, and she became radiant in the full assurance of success. She seated herself complacently in her familiar place by his feet.

"An' I'll write your name on the leaf, John," she said, "one o' these days, when I've a-got out the ink."

CHAPTER VII

VIRGINIA CREEPER

TRYPHENA was excited, but for that matter so was all Stow.

She was standing below the window early of a Saturday afternoon, and John could hear her stripping away the long runners of the Virginia creeper, talking all the while with an animation which captivated his attention.

"Yes, Aunt Joshua," she was saying, "and she went over her own self there-right, an' in about half-a-second — well, ten minutes at the most — over came the young gardening chap wi' a great basket, ay! a'most so big as a half-bag-maund, or very near to it, an' all a score of bunches full up, yellow and black, and some o' 'em so big as your head, Aunt

Joshua, or bigger. And then in half-a-jiffy, back again herself, and spread 'em out on a paper on the chancel steps. And Aunt Joshua, they covered all the newspaper only doubled once in two — or all but. An' really, Aunt Joshua, some o' the berries were all so big as welsh-nuts — or so near as a touch. An' all to be given away to any sick, or to old people after the Sunday. And she had on, Aunt Joshua, a sort o' thin, woolly stuff, about the colour o' scald cream, flounced all roun' wi' real lace, an' a gold filigree belt, an' the same straw hat she had on the day she came down here. An' really nothing stuck-up about her, Aunt Joshua, but she came and talked for all the world as if she'd known anybody all her life. An' she said we wanted some Virginia creeper turned off red, an' so I said, Aunt Joshua, that I'd just run down home — but la! really I think anybody could just lean out o' John's window an' get — "

Her sentence incomplete, the girl came running upstairs followed by Mrs. Joshua Petti-

grew, whose black blouse palpitated with eager anxiety to hear more of this Lady Bountiful so recently descended upon Stow. For years Mrs. Pettigrew had disapproved of church decorations as having a distinctly Papistical tendency, but the idea of grapes, yellow and black, in such profusion, dispelled her doubts. And this was the lady who had been so kind to John.

Tryphena sat upon the window-ledge, leaning out to break off the swaying tendrons covered with blood-red leaves, but talking all the while.

"An' she asked for you, John, an' whether you did get stronger, an' whether you were pleased wi' the book. An' she said she only spoke of you to Lieutenant Pierce, an' he thought to send it all of himself. An' she said, did you like the new story in the magazine, an' I said we didn't take it in now, an' she said she'd lend it to us if we were a-minded, an' I said, 'Thank you very much, Miss Mervin,' I said, an' she said she should like to look over

the chamber where the king hid more at leisure, and very likely she would walk down this afternoon if that was convenient, an' I said, 'Quite convenient, Miss Mervin,' an' then I ran along for the Virginia creeper."

Tryphena's tongue might have run along interminably but that she had already strewed the oriel floor with foliage. Blushing with her exertions, she laid the longest of the delicate shoots around her neck, and with both hands full, hurried away to the church.

Through the garden, and up the street, John Pettigrew watched her with affectionate delight. So she also had only to have speech with Portia to fall under the witchery of that entrancing frankness. Tryphena now, he thought, would understand and for ever join in his enthusiasm. And that was something, for her jealous detraction had jarred upon him as a false note in the harmony of their friendship.

And Portia — if by mishap he should address her as Portia! — his sensibility trembled at an idea so appalling — would come again this

afternoon. There crept over him a presentiment that with her coming a new era would begin, just as when the curate came who gave him learning. She would lend him the magazine, and perhaps relieve his poverty in books. And yet, although he watched intently from his window lest she might come unawares, a certain awe tempered his anticipation. But that a sympathetic touch can bridge the widest gulf, a lady from the Hall enthroned upon the hill appeared remote and inaccessible as a princess of the blood.

The time passed slowly. Perhaps she would not come. Tryphena had said "very likely"—he remembered the exact words. But then the luxurious opulence of health can well afford to waste a mere intention on the slightest whim; whilst he, a prisoner, whose pleasures came as alms, must go in want, and reckon the small change of life.

It was getting late. Tryphena must surely soon return to her turkeys, or they would go to roost. The decoration doubtless kept her long,

but now he might expect her every minute. Beyond the causeway he could see the graveyard wall, and the gable of the church porch, sharp and grey against the sombre yew. Two people slowly issued, Tryphena and another — passed down the path beside the square stone tombs of the Pettigrews, and stood upon the flag-stones before the tall iron gate.

She was coming to speak to him again, and he would thank her for the book.

She was taller than Tryphena — somewhat, but not much. And as she talked, with that caressing pleasantness still so sweetly fresh in his memory, Tryphena nodded ready acquiescence. "Yes, Miss Mervin." "No, Miss Mervin." "Yes, sure, Miss Mervin." He seemed to see the words upon her lips.

Presently she drew her watch from beneath the gold filigree belt, and as if startled to learn the time, shook hands with Tryphena and turned quickly away. So she was not coming after all. So little did the contemplated visit matter to her, that to-morrow, next week, an-

other time was as good as to-day. As she disappeared amongst the trees on her way to the Hall he felt quite sad, — not only from disappointment, but from a perception of the unreality of his romance.

Everything suddenly assumed the commonplace aspect of everyday life. Tryphena, in haste to mix her barley-meal, did not come to him at once. The pigeons were not on the roof that evening; and before throwing the food to the turkeys she had to drive a pig out of the barton. She had no time to watch the birds feed. And when at last she ran upstairs, for just one moment, before looking to the clean linen for to-morrow, she only said —

"Oh. Miss Mervin thinks she'll come down Monday — if she can."

CHAPTER VIII

FAREWELL-SUMMER

His couch was at the other window, and he dared not call Tryphena. She would certainly divine his motive and laugh — and beneath her laughter he could of late detect a latent disquietude. She was not so patient with his fancies as formerly, he thought, and yet at times her kindness seemed to possess a deeper import, her touch a new tenderness. No. He could not call Tryphena.

Besides, the disappointment of Saturday had taken the conceit out of his whim about Portia. It crippled his pinion, and brought him from the airy region of romance down upon the level fact. And yesterday his mother returned from church overflowing with exultation. It was

good to see gentle-folk again in the big pew, and they were rolling in money by all accounts. They had bought the young bay horse of Amelia Ann's father at his own price, and never beat him down, no, nor asked him to bate so much as sixpence. So Mrs. Pettigrew had been credibly informed coming out of church, and she repeated the information more than once with appropriate reverence and awe. In such an everyday atmosphere the poetry faded, and Portia became only the wealthy lady from the Hall.

Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew's harvest-supper was on the Monday, and to this great annual festival came all the work-folk, men and women, great and small, everybody alike. On this occasion Mrs. Pettigrew cast aside her customary frugality, and did the thing without stint or consideration of expense. "None o' your skin-vint ways," she said to Tryphena. "But let all have a-plenty once a year, an' you don't loss anything by it — not in the long run." By these words no personal imputation was implied. Mrs.

Pettigrew only meant to point a deeper prudence and instil a finer economy.

So there was a great clatter in the kitchen that afternoon, a dragging about of tables, and then a laying of knives and forks. Tryphena was so busy that she had not changed the bunch of farewell-summers in John's room, and they were beginning to droop in the cup. The chair with both books upon it stood close to the couch, but, tired of reading, he was looking at a streak of autumn yellow on the head of an elm tree, and listening to the unwonted activity in the house.

Then everything became still. The doors were shut, and his ear could only catch a distant murmur of conversation, in which his mother's voice sank respectful and subdued.

So she had come — this princess of his dreams, who sent him a present out of the clouds. His eyes brightened, his cheeks flushed in anticipation, and he took Lieutenant Pierce's book in his hand as if to help him give expression to his thanks.

His mother came tramping up the stairs, followed by the visitor, and then Tryphena a little way behind.

Mrs. Pettigrew was elated and explanatory. They had evidently been speaking of John, and she pointed him out as she would the moveable panel, or any other curiosity of the room.

"So there he is, you zee, Miss Mervin, just the very zame as when you came in here afore — or no, then he was at t'other window, if I do mind aright. An' very little he can do o' cou'se, except 'tis to read, or sometimes to watch the folk up street an' down. But there, he was wonderful well-pleased wi' the book you zend, Miss Mervin, — an' he knew to once where mus' a-comed from. An' really, I don't know whether I ought to tell or no, but I will — he had a name for ee, Miss Mervin, after you came here afore. Nothing any harm o' cou'se, but he used to call ee — what was it you used to call Miss Mervin, John? Ah there! to be sure he won't zay. What was it, Tryphena? I shall call it to mind in a minute — Por — Por —

Porsha. Porsha, to be sure, Miss Mervin, out o' the poetry book."

He shrank away from this disclosure. He could have hidden his face in the pillow for very shame. But the visitor only laughed. "That was a great compliment," she said gaily; and Mrs. Pettigrew went rattling on.

"There, you zee, John, Miss Mervin, she don't mind. But no doubt, Miss Mervin, lying here hour after hour, an' day after day, the mind mus' gi'e away to fancies. 'Tis but natural, an' I often think I should do the zame myzelf, if I were in John's place. For thought will not be still — no, it will not, Miss Mervin, in waking hours. An' there's but little change in biding a-bed — for so 'tis in a manner o' speaking — these many years. But howsomdever there'll be a little treat to-night, for we do open both doors, an' then John can hear the zongs, an' the crowd, an' the zoun' o' the dancen; an' they do a'ways drink John's health first, as meäster — for meäster he 'ood a-bin, or a'most to it by

this time, if all had a-gone well. An' he do have his own cup here on the chair close-handy, an' drink zo often as he is a-minded, or there's any call for it. But la! Here I do stan', an' run on like a chatter-bag, Miss Mervin, an' you waiting to look at the King's Cupboard, as I do call it, all the time."

But the King's Hiding-place had lost its interest; and although Mrs. Pettigrew promptly removed the panel, and stood ready, on the slightest encouragement, to re-tell the story in every detail, Miss Mervin scarcely glanced into the corner where Royalty concealed itself.

"But what do they sing, Mrs. Pettigrew?" she asked eagerly.

"Oh! all sorts," replied Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew comprehensively.

"Really old songs?"

"Oh well! they do a'ways zing 'Here's a health,' and 'Drink, boys, drink,' and zich-like old-fashioned things — but la! nothen at all anybody 'ud care anything about now-a-days."

The girl's face brightened with interest. "All these things are so delightful," she cried with enthusiasm. "And particularly now, when everything changes so rapidly. I should like to hear them sing. I wish I could hear them."

"Ah! They'd be frightened o' quality folks, I count," laughed Mrs. Pettigrew. "An' eet — o' cou'se I don't dare to offer — but if you thought you'd like to stop up here, Miss Mervin — "

It was a brilliant idea, and did honour to Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew's head-piece. But the girl hesitated.

"If I might — " she began doubtfully, glancing at John Pettigrew on his couch.

Her enthusiasm had enkindled in his breast a like condition. He understood this passionate ardour in the pursuit of song or legend; and his eyes were open to that light which gilds the common-place, and warms the lowliest heart-throb into loveliness and life. It was the one possession of his solitude — this sense of

poetry, so often humoured, but never understood. The perception of its presence restored his confidence, and his face brightened with an eager welcome.

"If I should not be in the way, and might come for a short time in the evening, that would be splendid. I should love it above all things," she said.

"Then if you looked down about seven, Miss Mervin. They won't a-finished their suppers afore that. An' I should think the best way would be to slip in unbeknown to dairy-house door, an' we to keep the kitchen shut agin sich time as you've a-runned down passage and upstairs. That 'ud be the best way, 'oodn' it, Tryphena?"

Both flattered and excited, Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew turned to Tryphena, not only for moral support, but as to one from whom such a scheme demanded assistance. John had raised himself, alert to follow each detail. But Tryphena did not join in the general expectancy.

"I suppose so," she coldly replied.

It was just in the dimmet, as they call the evening twilight in Stow, when Miss Mervin returned to the old Manor Farm. She found her way into the room as arranged, without difficulty, and took the chair so often occupied by Tryphena when reading to John.

She had brought the magazine, and also a bunch of flowers, vivid and rare, from the conservatories at the Hall. She made herself unaffectedly at home, and having noticed a pump as she passed through the dairy-house, she went downstairs again, threw away Tryphena's half-faded farewell-summers, and filled the cup with fresh water. The golden afterglow of sunset gleamed through the dark branches of the elms, but already the great harvest moon, round and full, peered over the hill. She seated herself beside the table and arranged the flowers quite readily, although she could not clearly distinguish the colours.

"How rapidly the days shorten," she said regretfully. "What do you do in winter when it is almost too dark to read?"

"Tryphena comes and talks when she can. And I keep saying over the things I know by heart. I shut my eyes and try to see them. Sometimes they will not come, and sometimes they are quite real. Then it is better than reading."

"What do you know by heart?"

There was a quality of pity in her voice, as when walking down the path she said, "Poor boy!" The last gleam of day had vanished, but the moon, now clear of the hill, stared straight into the window, touching everything, even the little deal table, with a delicate romance. He could see her quite clearly, but he felt no shyness in her presence. The sweetness of her sympathy was quite caressing and soothing, like a human touch, and so natural that he seemed to know her as though they had been friends for years. He rattled on quite readily as if it had been only Tryphena.

"I was learning the Merchant of Venice until mother stopped the magazine. Now I shall go on with that. That was how I came to call you Portia, when you were a stranger before we had heard your name. We had been looking at the portrait just before you came."

The new-found periodical was lying on his couch, and he took it affectionately in his hand. "You cannot think how glad I am to have it again. You see, when the weather begins to get cold I have to move. It takes such a big fire here, that mother will not have it lighted, and there is a little grate in the other room. But the window is too high to look out of. And on a dull day, it is too dark to read. I can always tell when the time is coming. First, the chestnut tree across the road turns yellow on the edges of the leaves, and the swallows perch in a row along the stable roof. Then one early morning the hill looks quite white, but different to the dew in summer. The swallows disappear, and in a day or two I have to go."

He sighed, for the time was drawing very near. She felt the sadness of this change but did not speak. She was searching for words of encouragement, fruitlessly, as if one might hope for honeysuckles on a winter hedge. Then the door downstairs opened, and Tryphena came, bringing two table silver candlesticks, one in each hand. As she placed them on the table, Tryphena glanced quickly at the hot-house flowers and turned away.

"I'll bring up your cider, John, in half a minute," she said.

There was movement in the kitchen below —a hum of voices and laughter and a pushing back of chairs whilst the table was cleared. At last someone tapped with his knuckles upon the board, and the noise became hushed.

"John! John!" cried Mrs. Pettigrew from the foot of the stairs; and a sturdy voice broke out into song —

"Here's a health to our good Meäster,
The founder o' the feast.

An' I hope to God, wi' all my heart,
That his soul in Heaven mid rest;
That everything mid prosper
That ever he take in han';
Vor we be all his servants,
To work to his comman'."

Then they all sang out in chorus, little and big—

"*Then drink, boys, drink,*
An' zee you do not spill;
Vor if you do, you mus' drink two,
Vor 'tis our Meäster's will."

There was silence whilst the company drank. "There is another version of those lines in 'Adam Bede.' Could you write me out the words?" she asked him. But at once the voice recommenced, this time singing in praise of Mrs. Pettigrew.

"*Here's a health to our good Missus,*
Now supper is a-done,
We'll fill to brim the flowing cup,
An' drink un everyone.

God further her endeavours,
An' zend her all good cheer,
She'll never stint the barley-malt,
But do brew the best o' beer.

"Then drink, boys, drink,
An' zee you do not spill;
Vor if you do, you mus' drink two,
Vor 'tis our Missus' will."

"There are a lot of verses," he began to explain, "and they alter them to apply to everybody present."

"Here's a health to Miss Tryphena,
The maid all eyes admire;
An' for years, please God to gi'e her joy
An' all her heart's desire;
An' shower down his blessings
On her wi' open han',
Long life an' health an' happiness,
Wi' a prosperous good-man.

"Then drink, boys, drink,
An' zee you do not spill;

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Vor if you do, you mus' drink two,
Vor 'tis Miss Tryphena's will."

The chorus ceased. The important ceremony of the evening was fulfilled. A call for the crowder, and presently the fiddle struck up an interminable tune. They could hear the voices of different dancers urging each other to begin, and then followed the shuffling of feet and the striking of hobnails upon the stone floor. Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew availed herself of that opportunity to run upstairs.

The visitor looked at her watch and rose to go.

"My father will be waiting," she said. "He promised to walk down and meet me in the road."

"La there, Miss Mervin, you mus' be tired o' listening to their nonsense to be sure," said Mrs. Pettigrew in her most superior manner. "But I pulled the door to, an' I'll light ee across dairy-house and down garden into street."

The girl shook hands with John Pettigrew. "I will bring you the next magazine as soon as

it comes," she said. "But I shall see you again before you migrate."

The brightness departed as, preceded by Mrs. Pettigrew, she went away. The moon had risen out of sight, and only glanced aslant across the window floor. The remaining candle served to intensify the gloom of the dark panels and heavy oak ceiling, and he turned his face towards the window and looked out upon the night. The sky was clear; the stars were soft and bright. He could feel the frosty breath of approaching winter in the air. Then he sighed to think the summer gone.

Apparently Tryphena had forgotten the cider, for presently she brought it in great haste.

"La, John!" she said, with great disdain, as she placed the cup within reach upon the table. "There! I wouldn' gi'e a thank-ee for these-here hot-house flowers. Why, if one half o' the geraniums ha'n't a-dropped off a'ready!"

CHAPTER IX

TRYPHENA'S WISH

NEVER had he dreaded so much the migration to the little room.

Doubtless his returning strength — for they talked of getting him about again next spring — added to his restlessness, and made him sad to leave the light and air of the chamber where the king hid. Besides, no visitor could ever enter that mere attic, with its meagre window in the roof and walls as narrow as a prison cell. And Portia had promised to bring the magazine. Perhaps she would come herself with it every month; and there, his eye could not watch to see her passing down the street, nor his ear listen for her voice at the front door. He longed

for Portia as he had always hungered for poetry. She was the heroine of his romance, the embodiment of many a waking dream. And this was the most serious reason of his sadness, but he dared not tell it to Tryphena. He only wondered sometimes when the magazine would come; and that, Tryphena naturally didn't know or couldn't think.

The time drew on apace. It was the middle of October. The leaves upon the maple-bushes in the hedgerows on the hillside were yellow as guineas; and when at mid-day Tryphena opened the window to the hazy glow of Indian summer, there rose from the garden a breath of autumn and decay.

Tryphena sat by his couch with a double handful of cob-nuts and a pinch of salt on a screw of paper. Nuts had been wonderful plenty to year; and there was a goodish lot of blackberries too that fall. Tryphena looked quite beautiful that afternoon, with just a hint of purple on her lips and a cluster of six stuck in the button-hole above her bosom.

The little room had been scrubbed out that morning.

Across the stubble on the hill a party of shooters went walking towards the wood. One shot, and a black retriever ran in to pick up a hare. Tryphena, watching with the keenest interest, identified the successful individual by pointing out the little cloud of blue smoke hanging in the air.

"They have company at the Hall, so 'tis said," she remarked.

In silence they watched the sportsmen out of sight.

"How I shall hate going from here!" he murmured with a sigh.

Tryphena's sympathy was rarely sad, and she burst out with the cheerful hopefulness of perfect health.

"La! John! We could never get round the blind side o' Aunt Joshua, I suppose. There, 'tis nothing in this world but the thought o' the firing and the bit o' extra work. I'd do that myself, and glad o' the chance right enough.

That wouldn't make so very much difference, and I'd do a good bit more 'an that wi' all my heart to give ee pleasure, John. But there, I suppose 'twould take half a load o' wood to make one good blaze in that great fireplace; and Aunt Joshua wouldn't be able to sleep o' nights for thinking o' the expense. How much money have ee got, John? I'd find a few shillings; and if we could get Aunt Joshua to let old Blackbird do the hauling, we could — "

"Oh no!" he interrupted quickly. "I couldn't let you do that, Tryphena. I wouldn't think of such a thing." But her generosity touched him, and he looked into the girl's eyes with real affection.

"Tryphena what?"

"Tryphena, kindest girl on earth."

"Ah! If I could talk Aunt Joshua over, that would be some sense, wouldn't it? More than all the poetry. All very well." Tryphena spoke with enthusiasm, but he shook his head.

"Well, I'll try it on anyway. She can but

jump down my throat, and that won't hurt so very much. Words break no bones after all. And I'll just catch Aunt Joshua next time she's smiling, and tackle her to once." Then she glanced at the great open fireplace, and added, "I should dearly like it, myself. Why, we'd sit round of a winter night, an' what a lot o' tatties we could bake."

The seemingly auspicious moment arrived more quickly than might have been expected, for just then the garden hatch slammed, and Tryphena turned her head to look towards the path. John Pettigrew's eye rested lovingly on her even profile and finely modelled neck. He took the whim to call her Amaryllis. Why had he never thought of that before? And yet he would not, for Tryphena was apt to be suspicious of words she did not understand. Dear Tryphena! How good-natured she always was!

"'Tis the under-keeper," cried the girl, rising at once to run downstairs.

Then Mrs. Pettigrew's voice sounded shrill

and jubilant from the porch. "Very much obliged indeed, you please to say. Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew is very much obliged. Will you drink a cup of cider?"

But the man had no time. He must hurry along. He had just nipped up street for the purpose, and must put his best leg afore. He would make so bold as to stop some other day.

"What is it, aunt?" cried Tryphena, from the kitchen. "Birds?"

In those parts partridges are always understood by the word birds.

"No. Pheasants," replied Mrs. Pettigrew with pride. For although in calmer moments she had often averred that she "wouldn't give a thank-ee" for all the game in creation, but would rather have the wing of one "o' them little spangled poulets" than the best pheasant that ever flew, Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew always preened her dignity, and felt her heart glow in the sun of a compliment. "It will be a treat for John," she said, affecting per-

sonal indifference, as followed by Tryphena, she strode upstairs.

"John can't abide the thought of going into the little room," said the girl innocently. "Can ee, John?"

"I suppose not. 'Tisn' to be expected but what he'd like the year all summer, and everything his own way. But there, Providence made frostes wi'out consulting John Pettigrew, I suppose; an' a good thing too, else the earth would be eat out next spring wi' maggots o' one sort or another."

Mrs. Pettigrew spoke in thorough good-humour, but with a proper sense of her own wisdom, of course; and Tryphena, nothing daunted, continued —

"To be sure, he'd get on much better here in the light and air. And, after all, 'twouldn't be so very much trouble. And for a few weeks, so that the winter shouldn't seem so long like, why, we could buy a cord o' wood ourselves, Aunt Joshua, and then — "

"Now don't tell up any such nonsense,

Tryphena," interrupted Mrs. Pettigrew sharply. "Putting discontent in the boy's mind. Why, you might so well try to warm Stow church as this barn of a place. You've been a-tellen o' this afore, I know you have, Tryphena. And 'tis very wrong filling up his head wi' fancies — and very thoughtless and unkind — and if you ever had any feeling you'd see that 'twould be a zin an' a shame an' a wicked waste to — Hush! There's Miss Mervin coming in. Why, 'tis really nothing this a'ternoon but runnen to door — " And Mrs. Pettigrew slipped off her apron as she hurried downstairs.

"Never mind, Tryphena," he said affectionately.

But Tryphena's eye was angry, and her cheek flushed.

"I suppose she'll want to come up here," said the girl almost spitefully, as she went away.

The surmise was correct. Portia had brought both grapes and flowers, but she stayed talking

with Mrs. Pettigrew some while before they ascended to the chamber where the king hid. By that time everything was settled and Mrs. Pettigrew full of explanation. For Miss Mervin had come that afternoon to ask a favour, and how could Mrs. Pettigrew refuse a lady from the Hall, who foresaw and provided against every objection? She would like to make some studies — some drawings of the room, she said, if it would not be too inconvenient — with a view perhaps to a larger picture. In that case she must come many times during the winter. If she might come without giving trouble, as the other night, she would make any suitable arrangement about the fire. She must have a fire — not only for warmth but to fulfil her intention. She was thinking of a subject in the Great Rebellion.

And Mrs. Pettigrew nodded. As she afterwards explained, she really could not find it in her heart to say "no." For look at it how you would, Miss Mervin was very fair about the fire; and after all it was an historical room,

you see; and when you *have* a-got gentle-folk to Stow 'tis nothen but right to make the most of 'em, I suppose. Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew held a vague opinion that the whims of gentle-folk made the world go round. If they were discouraged at home and driven abroad for a holiday, the circulation of wealth must dwindle and the heart of prosperity cease to beat. Besides, a favourable arrangement would save a fire in the little room.

"I suppose John wouldn't be in the way," she said.

"Oh dear no. If I should not disturb him."

So the favour denied to Tryphena was readily conceded, and arrangements forthwith made. Miss Mervin would send down some things on the morrow, and come of a morning as occasion served. She laid the flowers and fruit upon the table, and stood talking to Mrs. Pettigrew, but scarcely took notice of John, whose eyes remained fixed upon her tall figure bright and beautiful against the panelling. He knew that she had come in pity for his distress; and

to his fancy she became an old-world goddess condescending to direct the ways of men. Yet she was intensely in earnest about her scheme. When she turned to wish him "Good bye," he felt hardly sure that she had thought of him at all.

For himself, he could not conceal his emotion. For six years he had not seen a winter — only an icicle hanging from the eaves, or a snowflake melting against a dormer-window pane. He longed for the look of things. The lead-coloured cloud behind the white hill, and the rime upon the branches as thick as leaves. This escape from winter imprisonment filled him with excitement and delight, such as indefinite promises of recovery, very frequent of late, had no power to awaken. His eager anticipation pictured scenes from which he had been long excluded. They could hold their Christmas feast in this great room — burn an ashen faggot upon Christmas-eve — and the waits and mummers could come in. He watched his benefactress out of hearing and called —

"Tryphena! Tryphena!"

"Half a minute," replied the girl.

"Come and have some grapes, Tryphena. So we have got our wish. Sit down. It is like a fairy tale. And she wants to come here and paint a picture. Take some, Tryphena, take some —"

His voice broke with excitement.

Tryphena silently put out her hand and picked a purple berry from the bunch.

"Why, she'll have to come here nearly every day. It must take a lot of time to make a picture, I should think. I believe it must be the mantel-piece she is thinking of; for she stood there and looked at it. And she looked beautiful. Mother gave consent at once and — Tryphena, aren't you glad?"

Tryphena was engaged in silent mastication, after the manner of a person who has food for thought. But his sudden question touched her.

"Yes, John. Very glad. Very glad indeed," she replied, with an impulse of warm affection.

Nevertheless she rose and stood by the table with her back towards him, snipping off the stems, and putting the flowers in the cup.

"I don't consider that these-here hot-house grapes are half so sweet as the little green grapes against the front," reflected Tryphena. "Not to my mind — of a summer when they get real ripe."

CHAPTER X

JOHN WRITES

A LOAD of ash and oak came creaking down the hill. A servant brought a mahogany case, a portfolio, an easel, and something that Mrs. Pettigrew called a little pastry-board; but these lay neglected upon the floor so long that the intended drawings seemed forgotten. Some weeks elapsed and Portia had not come. But la! in the opinion of Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew gentry had so many whims as there be coats to an onion. "An eet, if so be as she couldn' a-had the room she'd a-bin in a fine tear in herzelf-like. But there, I suppose, when you've a-got all there is, nothen is o' much count," reflected that admirable woman.

He watched the last leaves fall shivering

from the elms, and the field-fares hopping on the grass fields. And then for days the hill and wood became obscured in a grey November mist. The landscape was cheerless, and beads of moisture hung everywhere from the straggling shoots outside the window-pane. Tryphena wheeled his couch round to the blazing fire. The logs bubbled, hissed, and cracked upon the great hearth-stone, and the reflection of the flames glistened upon the panels and dark beams. Hitherto he had been a mere summer visitor, but now for the first time he felt at home. The chamber where the king hid was again inhabited. There was comfort in the glowing ashes and company in the dancing flame.

No sight-seer ever called in winter; and when Tryphena was occupied he lay undisturbed for hours, gazing at the fleeing sparks and crumbling flakes of ash, until the place became peopled with the past. Troopers came trampling across the floor. Before the mantel-piece stood an unwavering woman, tall and self-possessed, answering their insolence

with silent scorn, and always to his fancy the face was the face of Portia. The troopers, baffled and abashed, withdrew. He heard them ride away over the hill. And from behind his panel stepped the king. The reverie grew upon him and stirred a fever in his thoughts. When she spoke of a picture, was it something like this? he wondered, that she meant. What would she do? How would she do it? Must she have an easel such as she had noticed in an illustration to the magazine? Eager with curiosity, he glanced at the neglected preparations, and sighed with a misgiving of disappointment. After all, this was merely a transparent excuse in which delicacy veiled the face of bashful kindness.

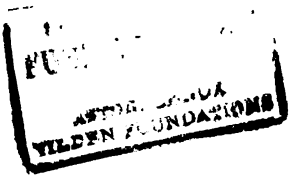
Then came a message that if it were quite convenient she would come to-morrow. Tryphena brought up a pocketful of Spanish chestnuts to roast, and told him so.

"So now, I suppose, your heart'll be at rest," she added.

Instinctively he sought to hide his ex-

citement. From the moment when in this stranger he found the realisation of a poetic ideal, Tryphena had been unsympathetic — sometimes even ill-tempered. Yet hitherto his flights of fancy never tried her patience, and she had endured hours of Shakespeare with perfect complacency. It seemed so odd that a temper always sweet and transparent as first year's honey should of a sudden develop this strange asperity. Yet he had hated visitors until this one came.

Therefore in the morning he said not a word, nor asked to be wheeled to the window from which he could see the street. He only listened intently for the merest sound. At last came the rumble of wheels upon the road, suddenly ceasing before the garden hatch. The pawing of restless horses, the slamming of the carriage-door — he could hear and picture it all. She had alighted and was walking up the path. Then the footman leapt nimbly to the box, ere the equipage was slowly turned and driven away.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An incomprehensible sadness crept into his heart to know she was the lady from the Hall. The feeling almost frightened him — it was so foreign to all rhyme and reason. A moment later, with a word of thanks to Tryphena, who had brought her to the door, she crossed the room to speak to him.

"I have come at last, you see, to interrupt your reading," she said pleasantly.

He blushed and faltered a welcome which sounded like a disclaimer. He was not really shy, but had thought so much of her coming.

"I want to make a drawing of the mantelpiece first," she went on, whilst she took off her hat and jacket. "And the days get dark so early."

She wore a plain serge dress and put on a large apron such as Tryphena used when at work. She looked quite homely, standing by the deal table, whilst she arranged a sheet of paper on the board, and opened her mahogany box. This she placed upon Tryphena's chair, and having selected a piece of charcoal went

to her easel before the fireplace and began to work.

He watched her attentively. Her face was turned away, but whilst she kept glancing at the carved stone-work she continued to question him.

"Have you learnt more of the play since I saw you?"

"I learn it by reading it over and over. At first it seems wonderful; and when it becomes familiar I know it every word."

"And then I suppose you give that one up, and begin something fresh."

"No. I never give them up."

"And never get tired?" she laughed.

"Not of Shakespeare. I don't think you could. It always seems to be out of doors. You see, when you cannot go out or do anything, you have to think of things. You cannot help it. Then the things you think become clearer than those you have seen long ago. Sometimes I get a strange feeling as if I had really been to Prospero's island.

And the forest of Arden! You know — where it says 'Another part of the forest.' Ha! ha! I think of different trees."

He laughed with the light-hearted frankness of a child confiding a prank. It was difficult sometimes to remember that he was no longer a boy, and her questions had been coloured with a patronising trifling supposed to recommend conversation to artless youth. Suddenly she realised the pathos of his situation. She bent over the drawing-board and was silent. There was no sound but the hissing of the burning logs and the friction of her finger as she rubbed the pastel into the paper.

"But can you remember a play right through?" she presently asked.

"I think I could 'The Tempest' and 'As you like it.' They came out in the magazine. Once I borrowed a complete volume — but then there was too much. I never stopped to read twice. I just went on and on."

She was about to speak but hesitated. "Could you —"

"I want you to do me a great favour," she begged.

He foresaw the request. His long thin hand shook with excitement.

"Would it be troubling you very much to repeat a scene — just as you do for yourself."

It was impossible to refuse. She had been so kind, and besides, he could not conjure up the feeblest excuse. His tongue clave to his mouth. But he saw her still intent upon the drawing, and summoned courage to begin.

"*Boatswain —*
Here, master. What cheer? —"

His voice was feeble and faltering; but as he proceeded, gaining confidence with every word, he forgot her presence in the reality of the storm. He was lost with the mariners; at prayers with the king.

"*Farewell, brother! — we split, we split! —*"

The scene arose so vividly before his mind that his chamber floor might well have been

the planked deck of some ill-fated ship. But when Miranda came with

" O! the cry did knock
Against my very heart! —"

the girl forsook her drawing and turned to look at him. He had no art — no skill of speech, nor elocution — but for him the illusion was so complete. His eyes were fixed upon the window, and he went on and on, oblivious to all but the poem, until suddenly aware that she was watching him — he stopped.

Their eyes met. Commiserating his confusion, she turned away.

" You made me quite forget my work," she presently said.

" You must go on with it to-morrow. It is quite delightful to listen. But tell me, since you can imagine this so clearly, did you never try to write anything? "

" I used to make things up," he confessed. " But it is only lately I have been allowed to move. I used to make up other things

about people in books, and people I know. When they passed up the hill, or along the footpath, it was a kind of game to think what they were saying. But I never had any way of writing it down. I always had to remember it. I haven't written for years!"

The reflection came upon him as a surprise. Certainly the Pettigrew family was not addicted to writing in excess; and preliminary to inditing a letter, or even signing a receipt, Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew always had to take out the ink. It had come about too naturally to be noticeable. And yet it seemed odd that he had not written for years.

To her it was infinitely sad.

She took a pencil from the mahogany case, and rose to fetch from the portfolio a small sketching block. He seized them eagerly — too delighted to express his thanks; and resting the block upon the patch-work quilt which covered him, in a large schoolboy hand he wrote,

John Pettigrew.

He looked at it a moment, in wonder; and laughed aloud in exultation. It was so new, so strange. Yet this mere scrawl — how ridiculous! Overcome with shame, he burst into tears.

She turned to the deal table, and began putting on her hat and jacket, talking rapidly the while.

"Then I shall come again to-morrow. And we will have some more Shakespeare. And I want you to make me a copy of the harvest song — at some future time — at your leisure. And you must write down these things you have thought of — by-and-bye. We shall have you writing a romance some day — a romance of the 'Chamber where the King hid.'"

She tried to pass it off thus carelessly, but her sympathies were moved, and she could scarcely trust herself to look into his face as she said "Good bye." Nor did she notice with what fond gratitude his eyes followed her to the door.

At the foot of the stairs she stopped to speak to Tryphena, and snatches of their conversation reached his ears — "seems to remember it all quite easily" — "repeats it with so much feeling" — then she was gone.

Tryphena came bringing a couple of logs, but having made up the fire she could not stay to talk. She was very busy to-day, and not until late on that dark November afternoon, with one thing and another, had she leisure to sit down and rest herself. She arranged a row of Tom Pud apples to bake upon the hearth. Then she brought the chair, and took her seat quite close beside the head of his couch. The dancing firelight shone upon them brightly; but the windows and distant corners of the room were dark as night.

He yearned to talk to Tryphena — and yet —

"Tell about the girl in the forest," she said coaxingly. "I do so dearly love to hear ee say it, John."

CHAPTER XI

THE PORTRAIT

"SURE!" said Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew, with a laugh and a gratified toss of the head, "Miss Porsha do sim to think a lot o' our John."

"One might almost suppose he belonged to her," replied Tryphena shortly.

For all unconsciously the stranger had encroached upon Tryphena's domain, interfering with her prerogatives, and usurping her most sacred rights. The frosts had long ago cut all the flowers, and the round flower-knot in front was as bare as a desert, for the snowdrops could scarcely pierce the iron ground, and Tryphena's polyanthuses were not yet out. Yet John's table looked for all the world like a flower show — "Really, almost too much," Tryphena

thought. Delicate tea-roses were ranged in beautiful array in specimen glasses, *vice* the cider-cup, superseded. Even the deal table was gone. It offended Portia's sense of harmony. She had pronounced it a false note, and asked permission to replace it with one of oak. And she brought books innumerable, calf-bound, gilt-edged, and elegant, from the library at the Hall. Sometimes she took Tryphena's place, and read them to him.

After the first few days he became accustomed to her presence, and then he talked to her as freely as to Tryphena. More so indeed, for Tryphena's ideas were rarely commensurate to her goodness of heart, and, although her kindness never faltered, conversation sometimes flagged. But now he found expression for the vague yearnings and fantastic conceptions of many years. The merest hint was sufficient. His thoughts were understood — sometimes even anticipated. The very air he breathed became replete with quicker vitality, so that the happiness of these hours mounted into his brain

like wine, and intoxicated him with delight. And with this strange result — that whereas of yore his dreams had been more vivid than the realities of life, now the actual circumstance appeared more unsubstantial than a dream.

She had made a study of the mantel-piece, of the window with the light falling across the floor, of the fire, and the reflection glistening on the rich, brown panel. He watched the progress of these sketches with infinite interest. But was she not going to paint a picture? Would there not be people in it? It was the incident he wanted, and to know what it would be about.

She stopped with the pencil raised in her fingers. The question evidently gave matter for consideration, or touched some hidden train of thought.

"I fear it is useless to think of it," she presently replied. "I have been obliged to alter my plans. In a few days we are going away until January."

In a moment the eagerness vanished and his

face became overclouded with disappointment. Her sympathy had been so sweet that to lose it, even for a brief interval, awakened a new fear in his heart. In all these years until now he had never known the dread of being left alone. Tryphena always came back soon — in summer was within call through the open window. But of late Tryphena's presence had not been an unalloyed happiness. There was something unnatural and oppressive in her silence. And in his solitude was neither beauty nor repose, it was so troubled with feverish thoughts of Portia.

She turned towards him to continue speaking. Her quick glance came unawares upon his look of woe. It recalled the summer afternoon when first she saw him, distressed, apprehensive lest one should rob him of a fond tradition. Again he feared incalculable loss. Her heart was moved with pity; and yet her woman's intuition took alarm. Surely there was no danger in thus ministering to the need of an afflicted boy, whose misfortune aroused her womanly compassion, and whose beauty of

countenance and mind appealed to her finest sense. He could never — her self-respect dismissed the idea as preposterous; then, as if in disdain of the doubt, her words sounded more than ever consolatory and caressing.

"But I shall not be going for some days. And I want you to let me do a portrait of you."

"A portrait!"

"You shall be a young cavalier," she cried gaily, "wounded at the battle of Langport. Do you know there was a battle at Langport? You shall hold a volume in your hand, with your finger between the pages, as you have laid it down to think."

She handed him the book, pushed his couch into the light of the window, posed his arm, and stood back to look at him. Imprisonment and solitude had lent a delicate refinement to his face. He looked a Royalist, ready to bleed for an allegiance, to die for an idea. His long hair supported the illusion; and, carried away with enthusiasm for her subject, she sat down to make a rapid study of his head.

He laughed with almost childish glee.

After all, he was a mere boy. Then as she settled to work, with rapid glances seeking to catch his ever-varying expression, she began to talk to him, to warm his imagination and play upon his emotions. To every word he was responsive as a flute to the breath of a skilful player. He laughed and sighed, and his eyes brightened with wonder and excitement. At last she finished for that morning, and, ready to go, leaned the drawing against the back of the chair that he might look. He clapped his hands in an ecstasy of delight.

The noise awakened Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew's inquisitiveness and brought her upstairs.

"Why! bless my heart, Miss Mervin!" she cried in astonishment, "'tis the very moral o' our John — Tryphena!"

"I should like to come for an hour in the afternoon," said the artist. "And after three or four days I shall give you no trouble for more than a month, Mrs. Pettigrew."

"'Tes no trouble at all, Miss Mervin. Try-

phena! Here, Tryphena. Come and look at John."

Tryphena was not demonstrative. The sketch was very like John, she admitted. In reality it reminded her of those happy moments when she used to bring him in a new magazine. And all that seemed past and gone.

CHAPTER XII

ON CHRISTMAS EVE

PORTIA was gone!

The picture, still unfinished, leaned with its face against the panel, for Tryphena did not look at it, and having recovered from her first surprise, Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew had other things to think about.

Before Christmas there fell a ground of snow. But he soon wearied of the whiteness on the hill, and called Tryphena to wheel him from the window. He had quite a library of books now, but he did not read. He could not concentrate his wandering thoughts. His eye pursued the print line by line — sometimes he said the words aloud — and yet, at the bottom of the page he had gathered nothing.

And when Tryphena read he did not listen, although he pounced with sudden irritability upon her unconscious eccentricities of punctuation.

At this time of the year Tryphena had little to do. The turkeys were sold and paid for. She finished up early of an afternoon, tidied herself with especial care, and sat knitting before the great wood fire in last winter's best frock — a claret-coloured satin-cloth — with a frill of new-bought lace around her shoulders. Her face was as fresh as a pink, and her frock as sweet as a rose in June. Yet Tryphena was greatly changed since she shook the cherry-tree last summer, or brought in the green stubbards of a Sunday night. Her appetite was certainly failing. She had no heart for roast chestnuts, and never a thought of baked potatoes. And she displayed no hunger for endearments now — perhaps because she had no benefit to bestow.

Tryphena had waited on him all these years, and loved him too. Nothing was wanting — at least Tryphena knew of nothing — until

this woman came and ruffled her contentment. Then happiness vanished, as the vision of blue heaven from transparent water when the wind rushes by. She hated Portia — the more so because she felt the passion to be unreasonable. From a light-hearted girl she had grown into a woman — with a woman's jealousy of her sex; and whilst putting on her red frock she had looked into the glass and compared herself, well, not very unfavourably with Portia. For she had just as good features, anyway. And if she chose to put a bit o' red ribbon in her hair, she could. And that's more than any carroty-headed girl in her senses ever dare — Bless you! Tryphena's glass did not deal in discouragement.

It was Christmas eve and beside the fire she looked quite homely, whilst her steel knitting-needles, to which she paid little heed, glistened brightly in the light. But something had crept between her and John, about which neither cared to speak. Her want of sympathy kept him silent. She understood that it was

her fault, yet felt aggrieved at his silence; and as the days passed by without a sound of his enthusiasm or single utterance of his regret, she began to long for his confidences. The feeling grew upon her. It became irresistible. She must talk to him if only to lie in wait for his replies.

"Miss Mervin seemed to take a great fancy to you, John," she said, suddenly looking up from the burning logs.

The words startled him. He could not hide his agitation sufficiently to answer her.

But happily, to his relief, at that moment came the sound of voices by the porch.

"The Wassailers!" he cried eagerly. "Now I must get the words. Find some paper to write them down. Do, Tryphena! There's a dear!"

The singing began at once.

"The black dog o' Langport have a-burned off his tail,
An' this is the night of our jolly Wassail.

Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail."

"Quick, Tryphena; have you got it? Quick."

"*Wassail! Wassail! all roun' about town,*
The cup it is white, the ale it is brown;
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail.

"*The cup is a-made o' the merry ashen tree;*
The beer is a-brewed o' the best barley,
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
So joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail."

"You will have to do it when they come in, Tryphena. I would not miss getting the words for anything," he said, his voice trembling with anxiety.

"Missus an' Meäster a-zitten by the vire,
An' we poor travellers a-traipsen drough the mire,
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail.

"Missus an' Meäster be you zo well a-pleased
To zet 'pon your table-board the white loaf an' cheese,
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail.

"Maid, perty maid, wi' the little zilver tag
Now do ee urn to door an' show your perty lag,
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail."

"Nip down to door, Tryphena. I suppose they mus' come in. They'll be ill-pleased else," cried Mrs. Pettigrew from the foot of

the stairs in an unwilling tone of discontent. She regarded such songs and rites as obsolete, but it was bad judgment to offend the labouring folk. John, thinking only of the verses, wistfully watched the girl depart.

" Maid, perty maid, wi' the perty zilver lace
Now do ee come to door an' show your perty face,
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail."

"I won't have 'em go upstairs, Tryphena," added Mrs. Pettigrew sharply. "They'll bring in all too much dirt as 'tes."

" Maid, perty maid, wi' the little zilver pin,
Then do ee ope the door an' let us all in,
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail."

He heard the door open and the clatter of their hob-nailed boots upon the kitchen floor.

Then he waited, listening intently to catch Tryphena's voice inquiring about the words. But he could hear nothing clearly above the noise and din of the whole company. And at last, before departing, they sang again—

"Missus an' Meäster now we mus' be a-gwain,
But do ee ope the door when we do come again,
Vor 'tes our Wassail,
An' 'tes your Wassail,
An' joy be to you, vor 'tes our Wassail."

Some little time elapsed before Tryphena returned, and quietly resumed her seat. "I've got most of it," she said; "and old Abe is coming in to-morrow."

"You dear," he cried enthusiastically.

But Tryphena did not respond as formerly, and for awhile she was silent. Then gazing into the fire she began to build *her* castle in the air.

"Miss Mervin told me what a lot she thought of your saying the poetry, John,"

she began. "Why, I verily believe, if she could, she'd catch a mind to ee herself, John. Only suppose, if this was a great house now like years agone, and you were a squire here, and she lived on the hill, and you'd spent a goodish bit o' your money, like what-ye-call, you know who I mean, and she an only daughter and every bit o' land her own, why, she'd take ee, John, quick enough."

It was a wild flight of imagination for Tryphena, but it found its reward. He laughed at her little romance, but his tongue was loosened.

"But isn't she beautiful, Tryphena?" he exclaimed. "When she sat there drawing, I thought I should never be tired of looking at her. She looks like a picture herself. She really seems like a person in a book. You remember the first time when I called her Portia in fun, and said she should be my lady-love — well, I never thought it could become so true. She doesn't seem a real person like — like you, Tryphena — but dif-

ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

"But you were never in love Tryphena"

To face page 143.

ferent — different to everybody. She makes me wish I could do something — something really good that she could read about, like Lieutenant Pierce. And what do you think she said one day, Tryphena? Why not write a story about the 'Chamber where the King hid?' I have been thinking about it ever since — about the troopers, and a lady. Only there must be love in it, and I cannot make up about the love. I cannot think of anything. You see, lying here these years I have never been able to fall in love. It wasn't possible. I've thought of that so often of a summer night or a Sunday when the couples walk on arm-and-crook and — but *you* were never in love, Tryphena — "

He broke off suddenly, as this strange reflection forced itself upon his mind. A great log had burnt in two and fallen asunder. Tryphena turned up her claret-coloured skirt and knelt upon the hearth to rebuild the fire. It took a long time, and he fancied she purposely averted her face, and trifled

with the smoking brands. His heart misgave him that he had said something unkind. Perhaps, like himself she mourned this absence of romance. Then the fancy of that evening when she walked over the hill came back afresh, and his heart assured him that Tryphena cherished a secret love.

"Not very likely," she said, slowly rising. "And don't mean to. But what nonsense we have been telling up. There, 'tis all your fault, John, for I do verily believe she've a-turned your head. Well! I'm afraid you've got to wait another fortnight, anyway. There. Let's light the candle, and I'll read a bit, if you like. That's more good than all such talk."

Tryphena had suddenly become serious. She reached the candlestick from the mantelpiece, and stooped to light a piece of paper in the flame. Then she crossed to the table — the oak table which Portia sent. The roses, somewhat faded, were still there, for he would not have them removed, but the

water in the glasses looked yellow and neglected. The borrowed calf-bound book lay open at the place where he had been reading, with the narrow bookmark of ribbon upon the page.

Tryphena stretched her arm across the table to lay down the light. Then as she withdrew, her sleeve just touched an overhanging rose, the slender glass was upset, and the water thrown upon the table. She seized the book. But she was too late. The page was saturated, and a great stain disfigured the binding.

"O John!" she ejaculated in distress. "A silly, footy, little trumpery thing of a glass that do overtip if you do but so much as look that way," cried Tryphena, with her teeth set fast, as she stamped her foot upon the floor in indignation and contempt.

Then with a sense of their calamity she burst into tears.

"O John! Whatever can us do?" she wailed.

Her ready nature was rapid with expedients. She wiped away the wet with her pocket-handkerchief, and held what she called the forrel to the fire to dry. But the paper shrank out of shape; the leather showed a damage irredeemable.

"What shall I say to her, Tryphena? What shall I say?"

They had borne no mutual trouble since the stopping of the magazine; and for want of words, Tryphena put her arm around his neck and signified contrition in a kiss.

"I don't know whether anything could be done, John," she presently whispered. "There is all a fortnight. I could run into town to-morrow to the book-shop. Hush! Here's Aunt Joshua coming. Don't let her see it. Slip it under the cushion — quick. And I'll just run in to-morrow morning without Aunt Joshua knowing, and find out whether anything can be done."

CHAPTER XIII

TRYPHENA'S TEARS

"JUST turn me round, Tryphena, so that I can see you coming over the hill. I shall be wretched until you get back. I could not sleep a wink for thinking about it. Perhaps it has not come."

"It will be there, you may depend," replied she complacently.

"But do be quick, Tryphena. There's a dear."

Tryphena had enjoyed a happy week. Her visit to the town was crowned with success; for inquiry proved the volume to be one of a recent edition, and Aunt Joshua had never once suspected her absence. Now she was departing on a recognised errand in the full

light of day, and would bring home the new book in her pocket. The accident, with its excitement and fear, had restored complete sympathy between them. She was again the good-tempered comrade of former days. Quite ready in hat and jacket, she lingered yet one moment in the sun of his endearment, and the delight of her own importance.

"And you won't be wanting anything?"

"No. No, Tryphena."

"Not to read or anything?"

"No. Nothing, Tryphena. It has quite made my head ache."

"Then good bye," she laughed as she went out of the door. He turned his face into the pillow. His only interest was in her return; but two hours must elapse at least, and he did not watch as in the summer to see her pass up the street.

She walked quickly down the path and crossed the road to the raised flag-stones beside the chestnut tree. Frost had made the snow crisp and dry, and in the sunshine

gleaming between banks of cloud, every twig upon the hedge-row glistened like glass. Tryphena felt the gladness in her heart. She would be quick and return to participate in John's delight. And with the exercise her brain became alert, and the dream of her life went dancing before her imagination. Ever since she first began to think of love she had thought of John. They were man and wife, in play as children. And when Tryphena grew, as the folk say, to be "sweetheart high," this love was still the familiar subject of her secret thoughts. For unawares Tryphena hid a simple poem in her heart, of the sort which finds no utterance in words. Not that she could marry him, for at that time recovery was considered impossible. But she was to love him just the same. She was to watch him, tend him, spend her life with him, making amends for her share in his mishap. And then at last they said, "A few months longer and he will be right — as right as ever he was." But after the first excess of her joy

a little canker crept into the flower. She had loved him always with contentment sweet and complete, until, when love became a possibility, she learned that she had never moved his heart.

He was blind to love — he saw it only in visions, as a blind man may. His thoughts were in the air, and he never knew when she enticed caresses from the irresponsive depths of his affection.

Then this Portia appeared, and he became alive to the music in a woman's voice.

Tryphena perceived all this quite clearly, although she could not have expressed it for the world, and knew that with this stranger he vibrated to a note which she could never touch. And so she hated the sight of Portia. And if in the transparent simplicity of his delight she sometimes saw mirrored the meanness of her dislike, she only hated her the more.

But to-day Tryphena was exultant. The air was bright and cold, and walking a delight. She would hasten to the town — return with

unexpected and surprising speed — dispel the cloud of his anxiety, and bask in the clear sunshine of complete appreciation.

She hurried along — past the cross-roads — up the street; and stepped upon the causeway before the village church.

The cottage doors were shut, and no one was in sight. The wayside was hidden beneath untrodden snow, and only on the path and in the middle of the road were tracks beaten hard by passing travellers.

A single figure came around the bend on the hillside.

For a moment Tryphena could scarcely trust her eyes.

A rising passion surged within her bosom as she glanced again and saw it was Miss Mervin. Excitement quickened Tryphena's pace, and she looked down upon the causeway, as if she would pass in haste, with a mere distant salutation.

But Miss Mervin stopped. A drift deep and wide lay between them, and her voice sounded loud and clear in the frosty air.

"Good morning. I was on my way to the Manor House. I returned unexpectedly last evening, and was going to ask if I might come for an hour after lunch. How is Mr. Pettigrew?"

In spite of her aversion Tryphena recognised the old charm of manner, and noted the unconscious elegance of the woman before her. It raised a barrier between them colder than the hillock of snow at their feet. Her jealousy and detestation increased beyond control. So she had come back only last night, and was already on her way to interfere with the anticipated happiness of the afternoon. The brief joy of undisturbed companionship with John was at an end. All this Tryphena realised at once, and, yielding to an impulse of passion, replied —

"He is not at all well to-day. I think he wanted to go to sleep. He said he shouldn't be able to read or anything."

The look of sorrow which followed upon her words made Tryphena glad. So this Portia,

who was going to the Manor House in such a hurry, could also suffer the torment of disappointment. With secret exultation Tryphena listened to her regret—

"I am really distressed to hear that. Then I must not disturb him. You think it would worry him, don't you?"

"He didn't sleep last night," replied Tryphena, and the evasion was more powerful than a direct reply.

Miss Mervin turned towards home, but stood a moment to reflect.

"Then I fear I shall not finish the portrait. To-morrow we are engaged—and Saturday is impossible. Monday is the only day—" They were walking up the hill now, she in the road and Tryphena on the causeway. "I might come on Monday if I may. Would you tell him how sorry I am. And I hope he will soon be better, and I will come then, if all be well. Tell him how much I was disappointed, please. Good bye."

With that they reached the great iron gates

at the entrance to Stow Hall, and Tryphena was left alone.

She stood on the solitary winter road on the hillside and tears rushed into her eyes. Her action had been so sudden, so unpremeditated, that not at the time could she see it in true perspective; and now its hideous meanness stood revealed. She had deprived him of his only pleasure. She would do anything to recall the words. In the first distress of her remorse she entered the gates and ran along the drive, hoping to overtake Miss Mervin before she entered the Hall. But it was too late. At sight of the great portico, the rows of dark windows, and the long terrace with its flight of steps, Tryphena's courage forsook her, and she hurried back into the road.

And she must tell John something. Some explanation was an absolute necessity, for he would certainly hear that Portia had returned, and learn the reason why she did not come.

Her anger and jealousy had fled. Her

spirit, just now so light and buoyant, sank into the depths of humiliation. She walked on with a suffocating feeling that John would understand what she had done. The steep of the hill was slippery, the joy of movement gone. She had grown up so simple and true, so healthy, honest, in the open air and freedom of the fields, that her heart was fresh as a flower, her soul as ingenuous as the blue sky. And looked at through the lens of her native frankness, her deception became magnified into an enormity. Tryphena had never much self-confidence. She begged endearments more from doubt than vanity. And she was so unlucky! It was she who made the old Blackbird move on — she who lost the magazine — she who spoiled the binding of the book. Recollections of these mishaps crowded into her mind like witnesses in eager support of her self-accusation. And then she saw the cause of all. It was true what Aunt Joshua Pettigrew had so frequently asserted — Tryphena had no feeling.

The thought made her hopeless. It not only accounted for all that had been unhappy in her past, but precluded the possibility of happiness in the future. For if you have no feeling, how can you feel? And if you do not feel, you cannot act aright. All this was involved and recognised in Aunt Joshua Pettigrew's constant lament. No one better than herself, Tryphena thought, understood the loneliness of John's lot; and yet, through this fatal want, she had never understood the poetry which was like life to him, nor become more than a mere companion. True, they were happy enough together in a natural, unconscious way, until this stranger came — this Portia — this woman whom Tryphena hated when first she clapped eyes on her, — and ever since — and stopped in the road to hate again between her tears —

But John was anxiously waiting, so she hurried on her way. She would tell him what took place, she decided — exactly; and in his joy at Portia's unexpected return, he would perhaps never suspect her own unkindness.

Long before she appeared he was watching the hill top, and he raised his head, alert with expectation as she came in sight. But when she reached the street, he fancied that Tryphena did not look as usual. Her head was bowed; and she seemed to walk with the eager excitement of one who brings bad news. His heart misgave him that she had not got the book.

"Tryphena! Tryphena!" he called, for she loitered a moment in the kitchen.

"Couldn't you get it, Tryphena? Why, what's the matter?" As she came toward him, book in hand, he detected on her countenance the traces of recent emotion.

"Nothing," she replied.

She placed the volume in his eager, outstretched hand, and he examined it attentively. It was the counterpart of the one ruined.

"Thank you, Tryphena," he cried in delight. "Come and sit here close, there's a dear! What a kind girl you are — how quick you have been! Make haste — take off your things, and wheel me round by the fire. Then

we'll have a long talk. What *is* the matter, Tryphena?"

"Nothing," she faltered, but her cheek crimsoned.

"You have been running. Why, you are quite red. It was all my fault being so anxious; but I can't help it, staying here like this. Let me kiss you, Tryphena."

She bent down to him, but without her usual gladness. His affection touched her to the quick, and her conscience must needs cry out like a wounded thing.

"I met Miss Mervin in the street, John."

"Then she is home? Where was she going?"

"She came back last night. She was coming to see —"

He could not give her time to complete the sentence. He clapped his hands in glee, and laughed. "Wheel me into position, ready, Tryphena, by the time she comes. Ha! ha! I will be waiting —"

"But she cannot come until Monday. She — she — I told her that your head was bad,

and she — she said she would not come to-day."

"You told her — you stopped her from coming?" He paused, and stared at the hesitating girl as if he would look into her thoughts. "But you never liked her from the first. You always hated her coming here. You couldn't bear me to like her — I can't tell why — or for her to be kind to me. And you've always spoken against her, and said something against everything she did. When she sent the book — and when she brought the flowers. For you never could feel how good she was to me. And I won't have it. I'll never hear a syllable again. You shall never speak of her again. Nor see her. Nor meet her. Nor say a word to her. For I love her — I love her."

He rose to a pitch of passionate excitement which startled Tryphena. She could not bear it. She turned away, and slowly went downstairs. She heard her Aunt Joshua bustling about in the dairy-house, and hurried through the kitchen and out of the porch. Her only

desire was to be alone. And she crept down the garden path, and stood between the black-currant bushes and the dark hew-hedge, near where she hid when she was a child.

And there Tryphena cried — because she had no feeling.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SURPRISE

SHE would come on Monday!

Tryphena sometimes moved about the room, dusting, brushing up the ashes, or piling up the logs. He longed to ask exactly what had taken place. What did she say? Was she certain to come? At what time did Tryphena think? But conversation was impossible. There was only one matter in their minds, and that they could not touch. So he lay watching the thaw drip from every twig, and every point in the window tracery, and listened to the water gurgling in the shoot. Tryphena stayed no longer than she need, and went silently away. Then he counted the hours like a school-boy longing for home.

A torrent of rain wrapped the village in a grey mist, and washed away the sodden snow, all but the white drift lying along the linch. Then a day was so mild that a thrush sang in the chestnut tree. But all this was nothing to him, except a road leading to Monday.

After all, she came so early, that she was unexpected.

A slight movement and sound of voices in the kitchen — a rustle on the stairs — he turned his head, and she was coming through the doorway.

In his surprise, an exclamation of joy escaped his lips.

She crossed to the couch-side, and smiled to see his eager delight.

"I almost feared I might be coming too soon," she said; "but it was my only opportunity, and I wanted to finish the picture, if possible."

Whilst speaking, she had wheeled him into position, and he wistfully followed every movement as she made preparations to begin.

She took the drawing from its resting-place against the panelled wall, and stood holding it at arm's-length.

"We have only an hour, so we must make the most of it. I shall have to finish it from memory," she said thoughtfully, as she sat down to work. "I shall always keep it as a souvenir."

Her voice sounded quite sorrowful, but with the sadness which foreruns change, rather than follows misfortune.

"Are you going away again?"

"Yes. Almost at once."

"But not to stay?"

"To stay for a long time, I expect."

"But not to give up the Hall? You have only just come."

He was watching her with eager expectation. She paused awhile; and then her voice slightly trembled with suppressed emotion, as she said —

"Many changes have taken place since then. I am going away this week, and early in the

year I am going abroad. And now I want you to promise me something. They say you are to be quite well by next summer, and then, when it will be no trouble to you, I want you to write, telling me all about yourself, what you are doing, and how you are getting on. Before that I shall write, and let you know where I am. Will you?"

He looked at her in doubt and perplexity. He understood that he might not see her again, but he could not gather the full meaning of her request.

He murmured an assent.

"I shall answer every letter immediately. And you are to tell me when you have written the romance of the 'Chamber where the King hid,'" she went on pleasantly. "And be sure you send it to me to read. Now say some Shakespeare whilst I work — and then I have some news for you — and presently a great surprise."

Doubtless she held some pleasure in store for him; but the promise could not arouse

his curiosity. She was going away; and the thought of it burdened his heart with a real trouble. He remembered where last they broke off with the play, and continued from that point; but to-day there was no illusion — he was not living in the fantasy but on the fact. For some time he faltered on; then his memory failed, and he stopped hopelessly.

"You did not tell me *where* you are going," he stammered.

"I am going to be married," she replied quietly. "The gentleman I am to marry has just accepted an appointment in India, and we are to go out at once — "

Her words were interrupted by a sigh. Then something like a sob filled the great empty chamber. He did not utter a word, but his face too truly told the story of his heart — that he thought of her not with an affection begotten of her pity, but loved with the passionate romance of a first love. That no hope inspired, no possibility of attainment

encouraged this devotion, made it the more pathetic. She dared not speak, nor even look at him again. She quickly laid aside the unfinished drawing, and to conceal her agitation, turned and began to pack away her things.

A loud knock resounded upon the oaken door in the old porch; and then Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew, followed by a strange footstep, came noisily up the stair. She was excited, for village gossip had already spread tidings of the coming wedding. She seemed chiefly desirous to give a good character, based on personal observation, to the future bride. She stood in the middle of the room, and thoroughly sustained her well-established reputation for talking a horse's hind leg off.

"And sure, Lieutenant Pierce," she said, "for I understand you are the happy gentleman, I wish you every happiness that life can bring — I do." She shook her head emphatically, as if to do with Mrs. Joshua Pettigrew was also to dare. "An' I a'ways

shall. For if ever man made a wise choice, an' didn' take so very long about it nother, by all accounts, that choice have you made. For sure, no kinder heart ever stepped into a house than your good lady that is to be if all's well, as no doubt it will; for we never won't talk of any afterclaps at this time o' the day at any rate; and no sweeter disposition, as our John could testify, for he caught a mind to her from the very first minute he ever clapped eyes on her, and called her — what was it you called her, John? — yes, Porsha, Porsha, that's it, right enough, out of the poetry book, though 'twas you yourself, Lieutenant Pierce, sent the new book by post, and John would wish to thank you for it, would n' you, John?"

He looked at his hero, tall, sunburnt, and frank of countenance, as he had known him in the portrait, and murmured his thanks.

But the whole place seemed in a mist. As if in a dream, he heard his mother recounting the story of the king's cupboard.

And Tryphena came to carry the mahogany case and the drawing-board downstairs. Then followed a shaking of hands — a hubbub of voices speaking all at once, but dying away as the visitors passed out of the door — and she was gone.

He was alone, and hid his face in the cushion away from the light. A quick footstep crossed the oak floor, but he did not raise his head — Tryphena probably returning for something forgotten. Then someone lightly kissed his hair — and beside his ear breathed the almost inaudible words,

"Poor boy,"

Just as he had overheard her through the open window on that afternoon in July.

He quickly turned.

There was only a departing rustle, and a falling of the latch on the oak door of the "Chamber where the King hid."

Early in the afternoon, the rooks were flying homewards, quite low and near to the window.

Already he could hear them cawing above the elm trees in the valley, when Tryphena came to make up the fire. They had scarcely spoken since the quarrel, but now that seemed remote and trifling. He could not do without Tryphena — not for the little cares and services she so willingly performed, but because he wanted the warmth of a human presence. He longed to have her sitting there, even if they did not talk, and he wanted to talk to someone to ease his heart.

"Wheel me over to the window, Tryphena, there's a dear — no, don't go away. Sit down here and look at the rooks. How they go round and round, and you can look down on the backs of their wings. When I came here first it was so long and tiresome that my head used to ache. It seemed that it could never end. And then I found a plan of watching them wheel round and round. There is no meaning in their going round — and you must not think. And after awhile, they wind it all away and you can rest.

"Look, Tryphena. If there were somebody you were very fond of; but it was quite impossible — you could see that from the first. Somebody who did not think of you at all in that way — would not dream of it, in fact — would you be in love just the same?"

Tryphena moved.

"Don't go away. Come closer, Tryphena. You can't understand what it is until you are in love. If it is hopeless, you do not think about that. You do not reason, or question whether — whether it could be. You only love. You hold out your empty arms in the loneliness and love — and love. I could never make it clear. You can only feel. You can't understand what I mean — can you, Tryphena?"

EPILOGUE

"Oh ay! Mrs. Pettigrew she 'ud show ee the room right enough, to be sure she would. A terr'ble long room, panelled from vloor to ceiling in oak so black as a bag, with a girt winder to both ends. ' They ha'n't never denied nobody — not as anybody have ever a-heard tell. 'Twouldn' be one mo'sel-bit of trouble to Mrs. Pettigrew. Not that. You zee, they don't never make no use o' the room; an' ha'n't these years, not since Mr. Pettigrew got about again. Straight on you'll come to the house half-way down the hill, overright the chestnut tree, by the same token."

That is the sort of information you might get to-day if you were to stop in Stow to inquire about the "Chamber where the King hid."

And in the garden, or by the porch, you might meet a tall thin man.

"Oh yes. This is the old Manor House. You may see the room with pleasure. If you will just walk in and wait one moment, I will call Mrs. Pettigrew—

"Tryphena!"

FINIS

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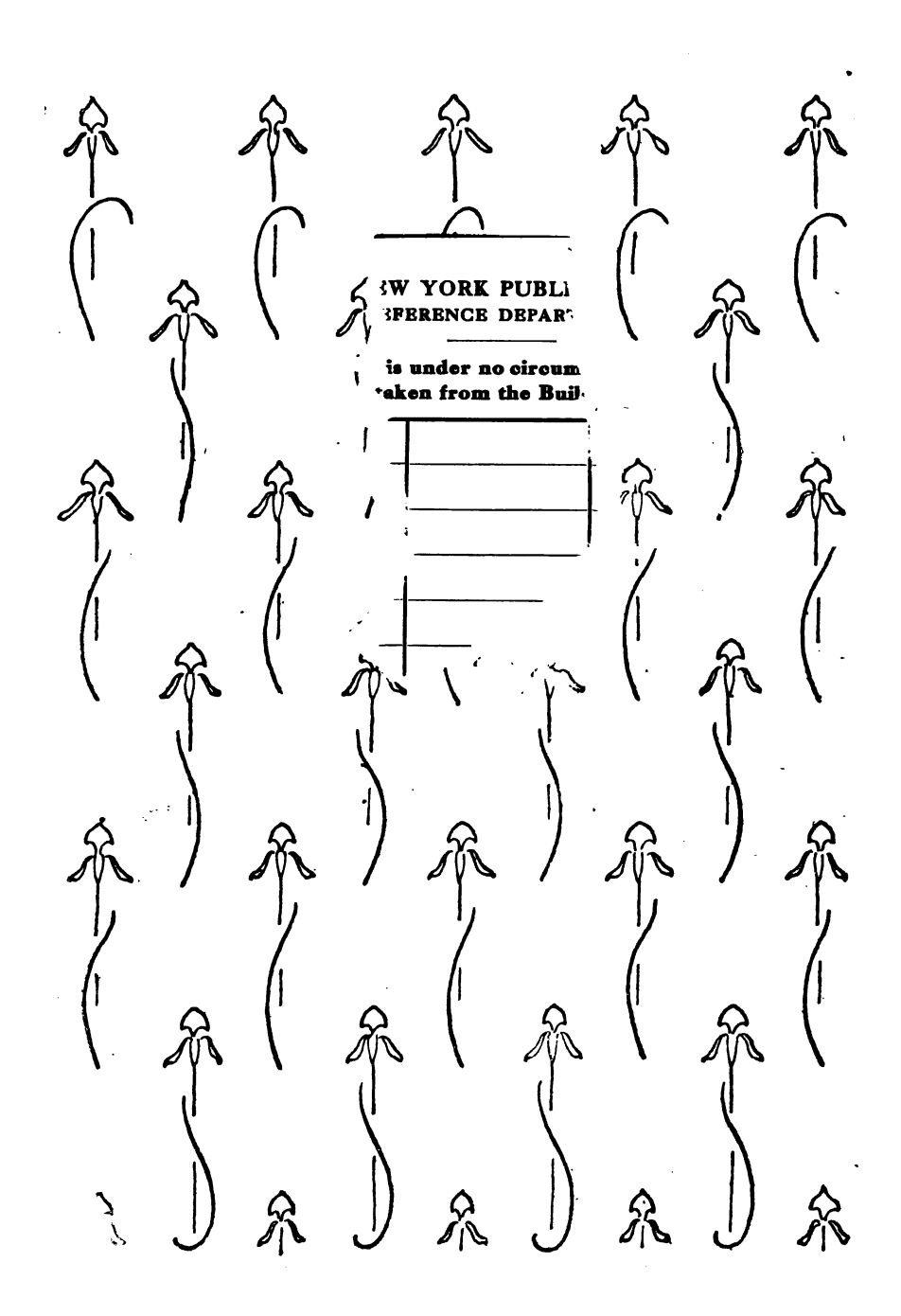
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